

DESULTORY VERSE

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LA TOUGHIE - HANCOCK



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DESULTORY VERSE

DESULTORY VERSE

BY
LA TOUCHE HANCOCK

With an Introduction by
S. E. KISER



NEW YORK
THE NEALE PUBLISHING COMPANY
1912

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TO
CLARA LA TOUCHE HANCOCK

No fulsome dedication here is writ,
No flatt'ring verse to show the poet's wit,
But just the truest words of all my life,—
The good in this is owing to — my wife.

L. T. H.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

SOME of these verses have appeared in various publications, most of which are still in circulation, but by far the greater number were published during the last few years in the *New York Sun*.

To the proprietors and editors of these publications I give my best thanks for their kindness in permitting me to republish my work. What was at first offered piecemeal is now presented in a collective form, with the hope that the public will endorse the editorial approval.

LA TOUCHE HANCOCK.

NEW YORK, June, 1912.

INTRODUCTION

THIS introduction is not intended for the purpose of introducing La Touche Hancock to the public. He needs no such introduction. If he did, some other introducer would doubtless have been called upon to officiate. It is conceded, however, that a book of poems without an introduction would be much like a formal dinner without an appetizer — without something tinged with bitterness to emphasize the sweetness and the delicacy of the other offerings. Nevertheless, there is to be but little bitterness here.

One might chide the public for its failure to appreciate poetry as it deserves to be appreciated, but that is not the purpose of this introducer. It is his belief that the public has been maligned and misrepresented and that it does in truth appreciate poetry. There never was a time when the newspapers of this country published more poetry than they are publishing now. It is generally conceded that the newspapers give the public what the public wants; therefore it is only fair to conclude that the public wants poetry.

The trouble is that the publishers, with a few exceptions, having made up their minds long ago that it was not profitable to publish books of poetry, are insisting that the poets must be satisfied to contribute to the newspapers and the magazines and give up such desires as they may have to see their poems set between covers. Some day in the near future the publishers are going to find that they have been mistaken, and then they will be compelled to make piteous appeals to poets whom they have heretofore treated with derision and contempt. Oh, blissful day! May all the poets who have

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been compelled to publish at their own expense be here, when the new era dawns, to assist in administering poetic justice. Possibly the new day even now is breaking, for this volume, La Touche Hancock's first book of verse, is financed wholly by its publishers.

Reference was made a moment ago to the fact that the newspapers are kind enough and sufficiently progressive to endeavor to supply the public demand for poetry. May a word be said here concerning newspaper poetry? There are superior critics who insist that newspaper poetry is not poetry and that the newspaper poet is a poor creature who ought to be pitied, if not suppressed. Let it be conceded that there are newspaper poets who could well be spared; the fact remains that the poets who have in recent years succeeded in claiming public attention and in gaining distinction in the literary world are newspaper poets. Riley, Kipling, Eugene Field, Edwin Markham — all of them were or are newspaper poets.

Riley contributed to a newspaper the poems that made him famous, and when he desired to have them printed between the covers of a book he was compelled to prepare the volume at his own expense, without the imprint of any publishing house. The poems that drew the world's attention to Rudyard Kipling were first published in newspapers. Eugene Field would have remained in obscurity if he had not been permitted to contribute poems to a newspaper, and the poem that brought renown to Edwin Markham, "The Man With the Hoe," was first published in a newspaper.

Other poets who have won fame or who are winning it by means of their newspaper poems could be mentioned if that were necessary in establishing the fact that the newspaper poet is worthy of the highest consideration. When it is said that La Touche Hancock

INTRODUCTION

is a newspaper poet, let him be assured that no greater tribute to his genius could be offered. Future critics and compilers who undertake to prepare anthologies in which the best work of the American poets is to be gathered will find their material in the files of the newspapers and in books that have been made up of poems contributed to discriminating journals. Of such poems is the present volume composed.

La Touche Hancock is fortunate in having merited recognition as a real newspaper poet.

S. E. KISER.

CHICAGO, 1912.

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CUPID'S BIRTHDAY WISH

O'ER one of old Time's many charts
On his birthday Cupid sits thinking —
Thinking!

He sees those pinky colored hearts
Transfixed by sanguinary darts,
And he really cannot help winking —
Winking!

He turns the page, and the next change brings
Rare presents of silk and of satin —
Satin,

Glove bags, and belts, and diamond rings,
Automobiles and such like things,
And he chortles, "O mores!" in Latin —
Latin!

"Love's growing dearer year by year,
To which fact I am much beholden,
May it grow dearer until we hear
That couples never get out of gear,
And each marriage lasts to be golden —
Golden!"

A SLIGHT MISTAKE

THEY decided, as it was his bent,
To the Bar he should later be sent.
After learning hygiene,
At the bar he was seen,
But it wasn't the Bar that they meant!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE TRAGEDY OF HUMOR

EVERYBODY'S still,
Everybody's solemn,
Papa's got to fill
The daily comic column!

Mother doesn't dare
To ask him for money,
Silence everywhere,
Papa's being funny!

Sister cannot sing
To amuse the folks,
Peace o'er everything,
Papa's making jokes!

Anxious, quiet, sad
All around we sit,
Isn't it too bad
Papa is a wit?

DON'T

"I'M tired of 'don'ts,'" said Dorothy B.
"Just as tired of 'don'ts' as I can be,
For it's 'don't' do this, and 'don't' do that,
'Don't' worry the dog, 'don't' scare the cat,
'Don't' be untidy, and 'don't' be vain,
'Don't' interrupt, 'don't' do it again,
'Don't' bite your nails, 'don't' gobble your food,
'Don't' speak so loud, it's dreadfully rude!
'Don't' mumble your words, 'don't' say 'I won't!'
Oh! all day long it's nothing but 'don't!'
Some time or other I hope, 'don't' you?
Someone or other will say, 'Please do!'"

DESULTORY VERSE

A CHRISTMAS HYMN

WHAT prayer shall we together pray
On this, our Saviour's natal day?
For peace, goodwill and happiness?
For faith to worship, and to bless?
For our own hearts that we may be
Thus fortified in sanctity?
For God to mould us in His love
By grace descending from above?
For His beneficence divine?
For Heaven's sweet light on us to shine?
For mercy from the only One,
Who can our many sins condone?
For strength to learn that He is just,
That, when our bodies turn to dust,
In His good time He will release
The fountains of eternal peace!

HIS PHOTOGRAPH

You ask me why with blush and laugh
I put away that photograph?
Ah! 'tis of one I fain would hide
From those, who likely might deride.
I look at it with fondest gaze,
For it is quite beyond all praise.
'Tis one whose every whim is mine!
'Tis one on whom my thoughts combine!
'Tis one I love with all my heart!
'Tis one from whom I'll never part!
Who is this most mysterious one?
Well, please excuse my sorry pun,
That portrait is supposed to be
A very flattering one of — me!

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DOLLY'S FATE

Down among the dead men
Dolly lies to-day,
Among the crabs and lobsters,
And fish they call the "cray."
I really wasn't cruel,
She had a pleasant fate,
I used her — don't you tell it! —
I used my doll for bait!
I put her on my fishing line,
And hooked her in the back.
I only thought she'd like a bath,
She was so very black!
But oh! the crabs and lobsters,
Who thought that she was food,
I pulled them out by scores and scores,
Though Dolly's only wood!
You think I'm mean? Well, p'raps, I am,
But if you're fond of fish,
Come round on Monday, if you can,
We'll have a lovely dish!

ON THE CONTRARY

OF mother and of home she sang
In accents that were tearful,
Till from all eyes the moisture sprang,
'Twas anything but cheerful!

Ah! trust her not — she but deceives
You with her words and beauty,
She dines with me each night, and leaves
Her ma to hash and duty!

DESULTORY VERSE

EPITAPH

PUT this on my tomb:—
"Whatever his doom,
He wrote with a good-natured charm.
If his fanciful mood
Didn't do us much good,
It certainly did us no harm!"

THE WAYS OF FATE

FATE hit me very hard one day.
I cried, "What is my fault?
What have I done? What causes, pray,
This unprovoked assault?"
She paused, then said, "Darned if I know,
I really can't explain,"
And just before she turned to go
She whacked me once again!

THE LOVER'S CONDITIONS

"I would not be beloved," he cried,
"For grace with supple strength allied.
That love I could not, would not heed!"
Remarked his friend, "You'll have no need!"

"Riches of brain and mental lore,
On things like these I set no store.
To such a love I would not bend!"
"Nor get the chance," remarked his friend!

"I'd be beloved for charms, which she
Alone in all the world could see."
"Well," said his friend, "you needn't fret,
That's just the kind of love you'll get!"

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THE RAILWAY NOVEL

GIVE me to pass away an hour,
While sitting in a train,
Some book, that has the magic power
To soothe my weary brain,
A book of love — a beauteous maid,
A hero full of pluck,
A volume stocked with escapade,
And teeming with good luck.

A villain, deeply, deeply vile,
Whose plans are all upset,
A villain of the good old style,
Who smokes a cigarette!
One with no sympathetic chord,
Who chills your very spine
By whispering hoarsely, "Once on board
The lugger, she is mine!"

Ah, railway novel of my youth,
What agony you'd pile,
So thrilling, so devoid of truth,
And yet you would beguile
The time, so it would fleetly flow,
You'd charm and solace pain
On trains unpunctual and slow —
Won't you come back again?

IN SPRING

THE flowers that bloom in the spring, tra la!
Have nothing to do with this case,
It's terrible now to sing, tra la!
For every one's voice is a bass!

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TO THE LANDLADY

TAKE, O take that bill away
For the rent you say I owe!
Come again some other day,
When my cash is not so low!
I would settle, if I could,
But finances are not good!

Press, O press me not so much,
Blood from stones you cannot take;
You have got me in your clutch,
And this compromise I'll make,
Though I can't disburse your bill,
Leave you — no! — I never will!

SUMMER MEMORIES

“AH, don't you remember that night in last June,
When together we walked by the shore,
While the band played a ravishing popular tune,
And a sweeter one as an encore?

Ah, don't you remember that little dark nook,
And the nothings I breathed in your ear,
And don't you remember the strolls that we took,
Unknown to your folks, on the pier?

Ah, don't you remember I said I adored
The girl who was then by my side,
While sympathy woke a reciprocal chord
We swore would remain till we died?”

“Ah, yes! I remember distinctly, and yet
Though what you have told me is true,
Well, really, so many admirers I met,
Which of them, excuse me, were you?”

DESULTORY VERSE

THE LOST JOKE

GREAT! Great! Great!

Was the joke that I made to-day,
And I would that my tongue could utter
What actually I did say!

Oh, well for a notebook's aid,
Where I should have put it down,
Oh, well to be thought a wit,
Or a most amusing clown!

But that good *bon mot* has gone
Though I'm racking my mem'ry still,
And it's oh! could I but remember now
That joke that was fit to kill!

Great! Great! Great!

Was that pleasantry you'd agree,
But the comic part I've quite forgot,
And 'twill never come back to me!

MAN AND A PIPE

MAN's a pipe, his life but smoke,
(You may think that is a joke!)
They are really much akin,
Both with breath are filled within,
Both of them composed of clay.
Take the breath of both away,
Nature has the selfsame plan,
The pipe will die, so will the man!
He at last most surely must
Die some time and come to dust,
So 'tis with the pipe you smoke,
It comes to dust—so where's the joke?

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THE ART OF CORRESPONDENCE

A LETTER from my old grandma? That's good
Brain food!
Four pages crossed in the old-fashioned way!
To-day
One rarely sees a specimen like this.
I miss
The bald typewriting — difficult indeed
To read,
But oh! the diction and the news in it!
A bit
Of gossip here, a scrap of scandal there,
A rare
Good sample of the way they did delight
To write
In times gone by. The art, alas! has fled;
It's dead!
A line or two — "I'm busy, yours in haste!"
No waste
Of valuable time, no thinking now
Of how
We best can interest our closest friend.
The end
Will be the same — "He'll understand, you know!"
And so
We send with illustrations cruelly marred
A card!

CONTRARIWISE

OF all glad words of tongue and pen,
The saying to reverse,
The gladdest are, "It might have been —
It might have been — much worse!"

DESULTORY VERSE

THE MARCH MAIDEN

MARCH romps with hats and dresses,
He tangles golden tresses,
He brings to every dimpled cheek a flush;
Those pretty eyes grow brighter,
That heart becomes yet lighter,
And beauty's wealth is centered in a blush!
Those cheeks have ruddier roses
Than any summer posies,
Those lips are like the coral from the South;
And, as she almost freezes,
She breasts the Borean breezes,
Which rudely blow their kisses on her mouth!
Though snowflakes down are floating,
And leave a rimy coating,
Upon her dainty frills and lingerie.
She laughs at their caresses,
Till blust'ring March confesses,
If he has any conqueror — 'tis she!

SWEET SUNSET

GIVE me bright eyes at sunset,
And silence o'er the scene,
With deeper shades and softer hues
Than through the day have been.
Give me bright eyes at sunset,
And music on the sea,
Give me those faery siren strains
Of Nature's melody!
Give me bright eyes at sunset,
That in the waning light
They'll glow in dreams of beauty,
And speak a sweet "good-night!"

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MY GOOD-NATURED SUMMER FRIENDS

THEY tell me not to eat
A quantity of meat,
Or I will die!
They tell me not to drink,
I say I won't, and wink
The other eye!

They tell me not to smoke,
I say I won't (in joke!)
And yet I do!
They tell me that to take
Iced water's a mistake,
Which is quite true!

They tell me not to dress
Myself to an excess
Like any dude!
They tell me not to flirt,
(That's warning's apt to hurt,
I think it rude!)

They tell me not to run
In th' overpowering sun,
I won't — pro tem.
They tell me — what's the use?
It's kind, but what the deuce
Is it to them?

OBVIOUS

"THE oak is my favorite tree," said she.
She paused — he took the cue,
"If I have a favorite tree," said he,
"It is undoubtedly yew!"

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THE SAUSAGE

MYSTERIOUS object! How are you composed?
Have you been ever rightly diagnosed?
Tell us — you've roused the ire of Dr. Grundy —
What are you, pray, you meaty salmagundi?
You're sweetness long drawn out, some people say,
While others view you in a different way.
There have ere now been very grave disputes
Whether you have some canine attributes,
And, when it's linked with Germany, your name
Is apt to get a most offensive fame!
That we should learn, 'tis quite expedient,
What is your principal ingredient?
To nothing culin'ry are you akin,
You have a secret medley in your skin!
We're always hitting on a different cue
As to what really is inside of you!
We want you to be legally defined.
Of what are you, then, normally combined?
Fish, flesh or fowl — which are you, we would know,
Just to content the English medico!

TWO SCENES

A PRETTY girl, a summer night,
A moon that's growing mellow,
A little kiss, a solemn vow,
A most impassioned fellow!

Same girl, but on another night,
Another moon, still mellow,
Another kiss, another vow,
And still another fellow!

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THE MODEL AND THE CHIEF

A DRY goods' model fell in love one day
With an Indian chief standing over the way.
She loved that chief with a passion so great
That her sufferings were hard to contemplate.
But from her position she couldn't stir,
And the Indian chief couldn't come to her!
They gazed at each other with rapturous glance,
But beyond those looks they couldn't advance.
She thought he ought to be the first to come,
But she couldn't say so, for she was dumb!
He wished, of course, to get over the way,
But had, perforce, on his stand to stay.
So they gazed and gazed till they both grew mad,
A state of affairs that was really sad.
But 'twas just as well that they kept apart,
For the chief had got a tobacco heart,
While she, though she loved him as best she could,
Had a heart that was merely made of wood,
And you'll find it isn't beyond belief
There are mortals like the model and chief!

THE END OF THE LEND

I LENT a book to him;
He lent it to a friend;
The friend may take a whim
The favor to extend!
He'll lend it to another,
His sister or his brother,
And one of these days, maybe,
My book will be lent to me!

DESULTORY VERSE

HOPE DEFERRED

A WAYWARD poet (may his tribe decrease!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight of his room
Something which filled his very soul with gloom,—
An editor, who nimbly wrote and wrote
With glee quite evident note after note.
He to the *deus ex machinâ* said
“What writest thou?” The vision raised his head,
And with a look that made the poet sore
Answered, “Returning poems by the score!”
“And is mine one?” The editor said, “Yes!”
The poet gazed at him in great distress,
And plaintively he urged, “I pray you, please,
Do not include my ode with all of these!”
The vision smiled and vanished. The next night
It came again with editorial might,
And showed the bard the wished-for acceptance,
But lo! he’d added, “Pay on publication!”

THE MERMAID'S VALENTINE

SHE watches the ships, as they pass by,
And longs for a mortal's love,
But her siren song dies in a sigh,
On a heedless foam above!
Kissed by a zephyr, tossed in the trough
Of a tempest's raging swell,
Her plaint is lost in a far off sough,
And depths of an Asphodel!
But her heart leaps up in strange relief,
For lo! through the smiling brine
The love boy dives, and stays her grief
With a mortal's valentine!

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A TONSORIAL TIP

A CUSTOMER sat in the barber's chair,
And asked the barber to trim his hair,
To cut his mustaches and shave his chin,
To make him, in fact, as neat as a pin!
Then the barber clipped and the barber shaved,
The barber trimmed, while the customer raved,
For the barber, he talked and talked and talked,
And 'spite of remonstrance would not be balked.
Then the customer said, "You have new rules
For the use of your tonsorial tools,
But a few suggestions I'd like to make,
Which, if you keep, you won't make a mistake.
Don't look out of doors, when shaving — it's rude! —
But assume an attentive attitude;
Don't give the impression, if you left the earth,
Of barbers there'd be a perceptible dearth!
Don't, if you can help it, expectorate,
(A habit in barbers very innate),
Don't try to settle affairs of the State,
From the Subway ditch to the last tax rate!
And, please, keep a silent tongue in your head,
And take as your motto just this — 'Nough said!' —"
The barber was dumb, but he held out his hand —
"A tip? That's my tip! Now you understand!"

A SUMMER ROMANCE

WE were engaged — got married, too,
But on a novel plan:
He wed another girl, and I —
I wed another man!

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AT A TABLE D'HOTE

IF you should chance to stroll one night into a table
d'hote,
These persons, or their prototypes, you'll very likely
note:
There's the gentleman who, hermit-like, dines nightly
by himself;
The lady of uncertain years, who's laid upon the shelf;
They sit at separate tables, although approximate,
And there really seems no reason why they shouldn't
join their fate!
The Beau Brummel, who's elderly, with spouse just half
his age
Who wishes very fervently to quit the golden cage!
Some artists, who will talk and talk uninteresting
"shop,"
And who will have to be content to-morrow with a
chop!
Some chorus girls with dresses that you might well
infer
Could not possibly be bought on fifteen dollars per!
Then you're sure to see some brokers in spotless even-
ing dress,
Who, if the food is "bull," or "bear," don't care or
give a guess!
The girl who doesn't eat a bit, but just picks at her
food,
The parvenu, who loves to ape his social brotherhood!
And then you're bound to come across the gourmand
and gourmet,
The man who's sure to make a joke on "Parlez-vous
Francais!"
Th' irascible old gentleman who likes just this and
that,

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And says that "he will have them," and so — well,
verbum sat!
The invalid who's suffering from dyspepsia or the
grip,
He abuses all the waiters, and doesn't give a tip!
The man who gulps his coffee down, and eats peas
with his knife;
The young and gay Lothario who thinks he's seeing
life —
And a hundred other specimens, whose appetites de-
note
That they never are so happy as at a table d'hôte!

ON A NEW EDITION OF JOE MILLER

A NEW edition of Joe Miller! Why?
Isn't it possible to let him die?
We've Miller redivivus all the time,
Until the repetition seems a crime.
Old jokes, old quips from Artaxerxes' tomb,
Which keep us in a sort of humorous gloom.
Why does a chicken cross the road? We know,
For we've been told a thousand times or so.
A door is not a door, when it's ajar,
Which of all pleasantries is quite the star!
In musical comedies — save the mark! —
We're driven to distraction, staring, stark!
With repartee our fathers' fathers made,
And which presumably will never fade.
Ah, no! with all his faults we love him still,
But let a later joker fill the bill.
"Old friends are best" applies to living folks,
But not, we beg to say, to ancient jokes!

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THE COSEY CORNER

A LITTLE cosey corner in a little cosey flat,
With scimitars and Turkish pipes and every kind of hat;
With pictures, guns of various sorts, and bric-a-brac
galore,
And a multi-colored carpet upon a polished floor;
Electric lights, rose-colored lamps, and everything in
trim
To please her spouse's oft-expressed and comfortable
whim.

He wore a quiet smile of joy, as peacefully he sat
In the little cosey corner in the little cosey flat.

"Of course, you know, you mustn't smoke, for it would
be too bad
To spoil the lovely curtains, which were brought from
Hyderabad;
No drinking either. You won't mind, for you are sure
to spill
Your B. and S. upon the floor. You won't? Oh, yes,
you will!
And off the sofa you'll take care, I hope, to keep your
shoes.
Now, darling, these are little things I'm sure you can't
refuse!"

He wore a sickly smile of joy, but you'll be sure at
that
He "blessed" the cosey corner in the little cosey flat!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE CONGE OF THE CROWNER

SHOULD a body meet a body,
And should that body die,
Crowner won't sit on that body,
Asking when and why!
Dickens' beadle is a relic
Rarely found to-day,
Here's another old invention,
That must pass away.
Fees are fat, and work is easy,
Age is moving fast,
Crowner makes a grand old master
Picture of the past!
Contraries are often met with,
There's a pro and con,
Though they've sat on heaps of people,
They'll be sat upon!

IN HONESTATE ET HONORE

(Before a statue of Lincoln.)

EMBLEM of a nation's glory,
Emblem of a nation's pride,
Emblem fit for poet's story,
Emblem which will aye abide!
Bow the head, but raise the banner,
Crossed with truth and liberty,
This the teaching, this the manner,
For a people who are free!
Moulded in that grand creation
Is our honor and belief,
Every stone breathes admiration
On his birthday for our chief!

DESULTORY VERSE

SUNSHINE LAND

You see Santa Claus in the picture books
With a countenance jolly and red,
And, no doubt, you think from his wintry looks,
As he drives his reindeer sled,
That he comes from a cold and icy shore
To visit the children, rich and poor, —
And I don't suppose you'll understand
If I tell you he comes from Sunshine Land!

But here is the secret — a simple thing —
It will make you smile, when you know
He comes from a land of eternal spring
Where a million blossoms blow!
Where all is happiness and delight!
Where all is crowned with immortal light!
A country which lies quite close at hand,
From the garden fields of Sunshine Land!

'Tis there he gathers each year the toys
That you see on your Christmas trees,
For all the good children, the girls and boys,
Whom he thinks it's best to please.
And, though he looks aged and very cold,
His heart is as young as it was of old,
For he comes from the Sunshine Land above,
A Saint of Mercy — a Saint of Love!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE SUMMER GIRL'S SOLATIUM

TIME was, when love and I were well acquainted,
Time was, when we walked ever hand in hand,
A summer girl all furbelowed, and painted,
None better loved than I on shore or sand.
Time was, I bore a sisterly relation
To very nearly every man I met,
All gazed upon me rapt in adoration,
Ah, me! how soon my sun of love has set!

Time was, when each aspiring bard affected
An ode to me in rather rapturous rhyme,
Why is it now the summer girl's neglected?
You never hear of her in winter time!
Time was — but is there really any reason
Why times so good as that should pass away?
For men may come and men may go each season,
But I'll go on for ever and a day!

THE LITERARY CLOWN

PRESERVE us from the literary clown,
Who borrows books, and turns the pages down,
Who reads because he's nothing else to do,
And then reads something that there's nothing to!
Who simply buys to decorate a shelf
Some trashy novels frivolous as himself!
Who skips a classic in an hour and views
All literature as if 'twas merely news,
Who thinks to lettered circles he'll belong
By knowing little and that little wrong!

DESULTORY VERSE

WHAT THE WIRES SAY

- "I BEAR a message through the air
Of awful misery and despair."
- "My message is quite soft and low,
In which the sweetest greetings flow."
- "The world I'm telling in a flash
Of some immense commercial crash."
- "I hurry with a loving tale,
'Meet me at nine, dear, without fail.'"
- "I'm striving but to be in time
To stop a heinous plotted crime."
- "And I — the last — I merely state
The mail's on time, the Pullman's late!"

THE ONE GIFT WITHHELD

THE fairies came; some promised wealth;
Some knowledge; some the best of health;
Some beauty.
They viewed the child in days to come
All she should be, *in speculum*
Veluti!

When some bad fay chanced to appear,
And hissed into the baby's ear
In gruff rage,
"Beauty, and knowledge, health and gold,
These you may have, but I withhold
The Suffrage!"

DESULTORY VERSE

THE ADVENT OF THE OYSTER

“WILL you walk a little faster?” said the oyster to the snail,
“September’s close upon us, and I really mustn’t fail
To be on hand quite early, for the month has got
an ‘R,’
And I shall be assuredly the fashionable star!
Quite probably they’ll eat me, but supposing that they
do,
A fastidious Four Hundred would scarcely look at you.
You’re never in the fashion, and never out of it,
And by no strength of reasoning could be called a choice
tid-bit!
Of course, were we in Paris, you would, doubtless, be
preferred,
But with any but frog-eaters the case would be absurd!
I don’t suppose, moreover, that our gourmets, if they
tried,
Could stomach you, no matter were you scalloped,
creamed or fried!
I have a dozen dainty points of a cerulean hue,
(Very likely you don’t know it, but an oyster’s often
blue!)
And isn’t it a paradox? I really don’t know why,
But I make them very hungry whom most I satisfy!
So walk a little faster, snail, for surely you can see
Tabasco sauce, horse radish, salt and pepper wait for
me!
The stout’s already foaming, and the lemon’s on the
squeeze,
So get a move on, sluggard, do hurry, if you please!
I’m really very happy now my time has come to die,
Here, I’m the next — d’you hear that gulp? Ta, ta, my
snail, good-bye!”

DESULTORY VERSE

TO A BUDDING BARD

RETIRE into your writing den,
Put beeswax on your easy chair,
Take reams of paper, nib your pen,
And ruffle your poetic hair!

Don't write of love, it's out of date,
But try your hand at something new;
Work out a subject really great,
And make it brilliant, if not true!

And, if you're searching for some rhymes,
Look up the poets — they'll supply you —
'Tis one of those quite venial crimes,
For which the public won't decry you!

You pause in doubt? A phrase of Greek
Will turn your lines in proper metre,
Or, if in French a rhyme you seek,
Your verses will appear much sweeter!

And then, I think, if I were you,
I wouldn't send them to the papers,
But twist them up — I often do —
Into the neatest smoking tapers!

IN PROSPECT

RETURNING home at close of day,
Who quietly chides my long delay?
Who greets me in a cheerful way?
Nobody!

DESULTORY VERSE

Who caters to my every care?
Who makes me take the easy chair?
Who puts my cosey slippers there?
Nobody!
Who has my dinner steaming hot?
Who for my welfare cares a jot?
Who heeds if I am sick or not?
Nobody!
But who will presently do this?
Who's going to give me every bliss?
Who — must you know? — well, it is Miss
Somebody!

THE THESPIAN'S YULETIDE

UP goes the curtain! The prompter's bell rings
For our yearly Yuletide matinée.
Don't talk to us now of "angels" and "wings,"
We've forgotten all "shop" for to-day!
For the wings that we see in this up-to-date play
Are the wings of the cherubs above,
And the angels we welcome are not made of clay,
But come from the regions of love!
No property turkeys we'll have on our boards,
We'll quaff the real wine of Tokay,
And play all our music on sympathy's chords,
And drive all our dull care away!
Close up the box office — there's plenty of wealth —
For every one there's an entrée,
Our money is stored up in vigorous health,
There's nothing whatever to pay!
So fill up your glasses, and grip every hand,
Not forgetting old friends far away,
And drink to our rollicking Thespian band
With a "tiger" on old Christmas Day!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE FAD

(The treatment by vegetables is the latest dietetic fad in England. Carrots are supposed to develop good temper, potatoes the reasoning faculties, etc.)

IF your reasoning's thick as mud,
Take a well developed spud!
If you have a sluggish wit,
Carrots will develop it!
Spinach brings a great will power,
(Boil it hard for half an hour!)
Beans — the French kind — predispose
To a lovely dreamy doze,
While those known as haricot,
We are told, will surely go
Far to raise a good effect
On your blunted intellect!
That's the treatment dietetic
Largely used by the aesthetic!
If an Anglomaniac,
Take of each a little snack,
And let the little stomach elves
Fight it out amongst themselves!

YOUR FRIEND

WHO is it that borrows a five or a ten,
And says he will pay it back surely — but when?
Who is it that takes you out sometimes to dine,
And orders the choicest of dishes and wine,
Then pleads with a sorrow you know he can't feel
He's forgotten his purse, won't you pay for the meal?
Your friend!

DESULTORY VERSE

Who is it that strolls in your room every day,
And takes your armchair in a casual way?
Who calls for a drink, as if you tended bar?
Who takes out of your case your choicest cigar?
Who is it that loves like a woman to talk,
And begs you, though busy, to come for a walk?
Your friend!

Who is it that pours out his stupid love woes,
Or paints his last sweetheart *en couleur de rose*?
Who through all his troubles will mournfully drone,
Though you've got, goodness knows, enough of your
own?
Who is it that drives you stark staring insane?
Who is it? Why ask? Echo answers again,
Your friend!

THE STOOPERS

THEY look you up, they look you down,
They pass remarks about each gown,
They note the trimmings on each hat,
They get each tout ensemble — pat!
They criticize each person's clothes,
They size you up from head to toes,
They give you such a freezing glance,
They stare you out of countenance,
They laugh, they smile, they smirk, they jest,
They are, in fact, a social pest!
Who are they? "They" can only be
Those scoffers that you nightly see
Perched on round cushions at their doors,
Whom every passer-by abhors!
Who are they? Snoopers, scandal whoopers,
They're "stoopers!"

DESULTORY VERSE

THE SONG OF HUMBUG

WHEN a patriot's taking a bribe for a place —
 Good of the nation? Hum!
When judges are feed to confute a good case —
 Justification? Hum!
When jurymen toss what the verdict shall be,
As one with the rest can't be made to agree —
 Unification? Hum!
When the doctor is giving you potion and pills
Not to lengthen your life but to lengthen his bills —
 Mortification? Hum!

When your family goes to the mountains or shore —
 Secret elation? Hum!
When you write that you find single life quite a bore —
 Prevarication? Hum!
When the day's very hot, and you take — just one drink,
Then another — then one more won't matter, you
 think —
 Inebriation? Hum!
When you wake up next day with a pain in your head,
And don't go to the office, but snooze on in bed —
 Last aberration? Hum!

When your wife says she'll take up the Suffragette
 cause —
 Equalization? Hum!
When you walk on the grass 'gainst the sparrow cop's
 laws —
 Incarceration? Hum!
When you're scorching along on a country highway,
And the chauffer is fined, though you have to pay —
 Gratification? Hum!

DESULTORY VERSE

When a baby politically you have to kiss,
Don't you wish it were — don't you? — a pretty young
miss?
Without hesitation? Mum!

THE FOOL WISH

OF all the wishes that one hears
What makes me really very wild
Is when a man of fifty years
Says, "Would I were again a child!"
I'm fifty, but I would not care
To have my boyhood back again,
In fact, the prospect's apt to scare,
When I recall the birch and cane,
The lessons and the lines I had
To write in Latin and in Greek!
I must have been extremely bad,
With, oh! what quantities of cheek!

The opportunities I missed,
When I was starting out in life,
The girls I flirted with, and kissed,
The one I — didn't — make my wife!
Such things and half a hundred more
I think of with no trace of joy,
Nay, I most heartily deplore
I ever was a little boy!
So now I've given life a test,
I hate to hear that fool refrain,
Though some may wish it, I'll be blest
If I would be a child again!

DESULTORY VERSE

AN ORNITHOLOGICAL SUGGESTION

THERE is a song I've lately heard,
Which runs, "I would I were a bird!"
A singing thrush, or cooing dove!"
(The last put in to rhyme with "love!")
But, disregarding things erotic,
I think, don't you, it's idiotic.
The thought to me has just occurred
That if I were to be a bird,
I fancy I would be an owl,
For that's the wisest kind of fowl,
With nothing in this world to do
Except to hoot "Tu-whit, tu-whoo!"
This thought has somewhat of pretense
To be considered common sense,
And more conviction ought to bring
In places where they're wont to sing!

THE SNOOZER

OF early risers bards have sung,
But what of it? They all died young!
The scent of dewy spangled flowers
Is just as good in later hours,
The lark may rise at early dawn,
The worm investigate each lawn
At 4 a. m. for all I care,
It's predilections I don't share!
I like to take a long, long rest
Upon a downy pillow best,
I sleep and sleep till it is noon,
And even then it's much too soon
To rouse one's self, for it's sublime
To doze and doze till dinner time!
In fact, though they may be inspired,
These poets make me very tired!

DESULTORY VERSE

TWENTY YEARS AGO

I WAS youthful, more or less,
Twenty years ago!
What my age was you can guess,
Twenty years ago!
I had very little sense,
Spent the dollars and the cents,
Earned my own experience,
Twenty years ago!

Oh! I was a happy lad,
Twenty years ago!
What a glorious time I had,
Twenty years ago!
I was in a jovial set,
Jolliest I ever met,
Tell the truth, I don't regret,
Twenty years ago!

Taking everything *en masse*,
Twenty years ago,
P'raps I was a little ass,
Twenty years ago!
Now, though wiser far than then,
Fervently the wish I pen
That it might be once again,
Twenty years ago!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE SCRAP BOOK MAN

THE man who keeps a scrap book, and insists on showing it
For the pleasure of your reading his literary wit!
He brings a mighty volume, and he lays it on your knees,
And says, "Will you excuse me for just a moment, please?"
He leaves the room so you may have a chance to read it through,
A thing which, if you are like me, you very rarely do!
After an interval of time — quite generous, you'll allow —
He comes back with a smile and asks, "What's your opinion now?"
You're bound to praise his writings as immense, although they're not,
For, if you were quite honest, you would say that they were rot!
Though you're very disappointed, of course you mustn't show it,
And more especially if he should chance to be a poet!
You take your medicine like a man, and tell him you delight
In reading such effusions, which are really "out of sight!"
Most probably you wish they were, so promptly close the book
Before he asks you, as he will, to take another look!
Then say good-bye, you've made a friend through saying what's untrue,
While he unconsciously has made an enemy of you!

DESULTORY VERSE

The young lady with an album, in which she'd have you
write,
Is quite enough to put a man to instantaneous flight,
But he who keeps a scrap book full of his own prose
and verse,
And will insist on showing it, is infinitely worse!

NOW HE REAPPEARS

A WARRIOR bold of a strenuous mould
With a set of the latest manœuvres,
With canvassy clothes and a guard on the nose,
And a few masculine dress improvers!
With helmet and mask, and shin pads for the task
Of keeping his foe's score at zero,
Behold, he appears, as he has done for years,
The up-to-date footballing hero!

He'll talk about poles and centres and goals,
Of bucking he'll give you the history,
He'll gladly define what's the fifteen yard line,
And many a pig-skinning mystery!
On passing and backs he'll give you the tracks,
He's a sporty and technical jingo,
And a voluble chap, when he's once on the tap
With his budget of footballing lingo!

And then he can — well, Great Scott! he can yell,
His powers are that way out of knowledge,
He'll give it or die, that ear-splitting cry
To urge on the team of his college!
But, far above all, he's got the first call,
You can bet all your good maravedis,
With poetical hair he's simply "all there"
For just a few months with the ladies!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE JANITORIAL KING

We've prayed for it with earnest prayers,
We've pleaded with the man downstairs,
We've gone down on our bended knees,
We've told him we would surely freeze,
We've proved it by our steaming breath,
We've said the cold would be our death,
We've vowed to bow to his command,
We've hinted Christmas is at hand,
We've promised him a mint of tips,
We've jollied him with quirks and quips,
We've used some words we won't repeat,
We — hang it all! — we want steam heat!
But he, the villain, gives a smile,
And calmly answers, "Wait a while!"

LOVE WITH INTERPOLATIONS

THE sun is setting in the golden west,
 (Quite probably!)

The little children now have gone to rest,
 (Yes, some, maybe!)

The stars are twinkling in the summer sky,
 (They always do!)

And to their nests the little birdies fly,
 (Tu-whit! Tu-whoo!)

And in the gloaming side by side we sit,
 (Well, that's quite right!)

Our glowing eyes with love's sweet sunlight lit,
 (You said 'twas night!)

We'll breathe our vows, and swear that we'll be true,
 (The same old bluff!)

Naught in this world can come between us two,
 (Oh, that's enough!)

DESULTORY VERSE

AT A MATINEE

SHOULD you ever attend a popular play
At a Wednesday or Saturday matinée,
You will probably meet with types such as these,
For they are the people one generally sees.
Half a hundred sweet girls with flower garden hats,
Which in height are equal to small Ararats!
Some extremely old maids, who try to look gay
In a very absurd sartorial array!
One or two chaperones, who aren't of much use,
Still just for protection they form an excuse!
The rustic young woman is sure to be there
With a calm condescending kind of an air!
A Harlem contingent will swell up the crowd,
You can always tell them—their voices are loud!
A sample of boarding house landladies, too,
Will, doubtless, be very familiar to you!
En passant, you'll notice a much begowned girl,
Who'll come in quite late with a deuce of a whirl.
Her reason for this is she wishes it known
That she is the Gibson Girl—yes, she alone!
A good many more you are certain to meet,
Who're bound to afford you a critical treat!
Then, when you have scanned the audience around,
The curtain goes up, and there isn't a sound,
Till the hero appears 'mid thundering applause,
(His face and his figure are mainly the cause!)
And a myriad of voices his entrance will greet,
All saying together, "Oh, isn't he sweet?"

DESULTORY VERSE

RECOGNITION

THEY wander by the sad sea waves
In loving fancy free,
One little favor all he craves,
“Ah, sweet, remember me!

“When summer breezes kiss the flower,
When winter blasts the tree,
I only ask in such an hour
That you'll remember me!”

Just one short month slips by — once more
In Broadway's dizzy maze
Behind the counter in a store
She meets his loving gaze!

And looking at her erstwhile flame
With true patrician vim,
She turns aside with scorn and shame —
She has remembered him!

THE SOCIETY POET

TAKE a little pathos,
Mix it with some fun,
Drop into a bathos,
Even risk a pun!
Peep into each feeling,
Sparkle like champagne,
Yet avoid revealing
Any kind of pain!
Still, if you should let a
Glimpse be seen of grief,

DESULTORY VERSE

Sobs must only wet a
Tiny handkerchief!
Let your rhymes be simple,
Yet be so unique,
That a laughing dimple
Comes in every cheek!
Blend with satire polish,
Sentiment with wit,
Merrily demolish
Every hypocrite!
If with tact you show its
Impropriety,
You will rank with poets
Of society!

FOR EVER!

AH, me! I often think, my dear,
Of what a time we had this year;
It's mem'ry will endure, I fear,
For ever, and for ever!
When you complained about the heat,
I bought you ice cream for a treat;
I really thought you'd eat and eat
For ever and for ever!

Ah, me! upon the usual plan
You flirted with me for a span,
Then left me for a richer man
For ever and for ever!
Some things (and girls) we ne'er forget,
And I shall think of you, my pet,
Without the least bit of regret
For ever and for ever!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE POET'S PLEASANTRY

You, man of threads and patches, needle, thread,
Won't you, please, come another day?
These dunning visits drive me off my head,
Reflect! Did you e'er know a poet pay?

Why bother me, you butcher, grocer — why?
The age of miracles is long since o'er,
Can dollars from an empty pocket fly?
How many times I've told you that before!

Pierian marble will not yield you blood,
The Muse's mint is drained to its extent,
And what I earn I spend on daily food,
For even bards must have some nutriment!

You've other customers more prompt than I,
I'm sure they'd pay you, if you made request,
On them I think you might as well rely,
And let a hard worked poet have a rest!

Yet some good faith I'd really like to show
By writing each of you a tripping rhyme,
Which may — why, what's your hurry — must you go?
Good-bye! I'll see you, p'raps, some other time!

CUPID'S BIRTHDAY

'Tis Cupid's birthday! Yet I hesitate
To tempt my fortune even on this date.
What shall I send her — bracelets or a ring
As precious as the ransom of a king?
A pair of gloves, some jewels or a muff?
Ah, no! of baubles such as these she's had enough.
I'll send her what she may appreciate,
I'll send my love — and boldly challenge fate!

DESULTORY VERSE

A PARADOX

Now away to see the Show
Enthusiastic'ly she'll go,
Motors now, you doubtless know,
 Invite her!
On the sport she's very keen,
Everything upon the scene,
Even scents of gasoline,
 Delight her!

She can tell you what mistake
There may be in such a make,
What is right and what's a fake,
 Directly!
If you listen, you'll agree
She can size up to a "T"
This and that from A to Z,
 Correctly!

Seemingly she cares for naught
But this modish Juggernaut,
Which her every look and thought
 Indorses,
Yet you'll see her in a box
Later on with lovely frocks,
Wrapped up in — a paradox! —
 The horses!

TO TABLE D'HOTERS

IF you can't pronounce the name
Of the entrée or the joint,
As your French is rather tame,
 Point!

DESULTORY VERSE

PLEASURES OF CAMPING OUT

HAVE you ever — under a tent —
Spent
A few days of unalloyed bliss?
This
Is what you'll find it out to be!
We
Tried it this year just for a spell.
Well,
Rain fell in torrents every day,
Say,
Noah never had such a flood, —
Mud
Up to our ankles; we were doused,
Soused!
And then the insects, brutes with wings,
Things
You've read about, but never seen,
Green,
Red, yellow, black, of every hue!
Phew!
We thought our Nemesis had come!
Hum
Like fury all the day and night,
Bite,
Sting, get into your drink and food!
Good
Heavens! not to speak of emmets' nests,
Pests,
That crawl down your neck, and a score
More
Of beastly insects — not for me!
He,
56

DESULTORY VERSE

Who says this sort of thing's all right
Might
Be reasonably on the spot
Shot!

THE QUIET LITTLE MAN

I REALLY don't know why it is,
But it has been so from my birth,
Each friend of mine thinks fit to quiz,
And make me just a butt of mirth.
I cannot wear a modish tie
Without their being very free,
It's very hard on such a shy
And quiet little man as me!

They chaff me on my coat and hat,
My shoes, my trousers, face and hair,
It's not so very red at that,
While I pretend I do not care!
They call me an Adonis, though
With that I do not quite agree,
It isn't fair to treat me so,
A quiet little man like me!

One of these days I'll get quite mad,
And talk back at them — yes, I will!
And then they won't be very glad
That they have put me on the grill!
I think I'm right in this, don't you?
I'm rather good at repartee,
They'll see what I, yes, I can do,
A quiet little man like me!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE UP TO DATE PICNIC

A PICNIC? H'm! You want to know
 If I can go?
I'm not enthusiastic, still
 Maybe I will.
I could, of course, excuse myself,
 I'm on the shelf,
A bachelor, misogynist.
 A hand at whist
Would suit me better, for my day
 Has passed away
For eating sandwiches and pies
 'Midst ants and flies!
Your picnic's on the modern plan?
 No funny man?
You really won't forget the salt?
 Why, that's a fault
Inseparable from such affairs!
 There will be chairs,
And tables? Won't you, please, explain?
 Tell me again.
What? Motors? Dine at a hotel?
 D'you mean to tell
Me that's your picnic nowadays?
 Well, that's a phase
Of being strictly up to date,
 That I should hate!
Give me the old time outing! Go?
 I thank you — No!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE LAST REVENGE

So you're the last fly!
Well, why
Do you keep coming,
Humming,
Annoying me so?
You know,
Though you may be late,
Your fate
Will be just as bad!
I've had
Enough of your kind.
Now mind,
You, buzzers, must go,
And so
Good-bye to you, fly —
You die!

THE ONLY VALENTINE WE GET

Now swains their loving strains indite,
Or paint the sufferings they can't write!
Two bosoms burn with amorous fire,
Or else the youth and maid expire
Transfixed with little Cupid's darts
In their dear pinky-colored hearts!
But you and I are past that age,
For we have long since turned the page,
When we were only twenty-one,
And used to worship Venus' son!
We don't expect a Valentine!
We get a courteous "decline,"
Or else this trying intimation,
"Accepted — pay on publication!"

DESULTORY VERSE

VIVE LA POLITESSE

'Tis the motto of the grocer's boy;
It's very marked on him.
'Tis the shoeblack's emblematic joy,
He shows it with a vim!
'Tis the pose of the improvident,
And 't isn't hard to guess
That the language hid, yet evident,
Is "Vive la politesse!"

'Tis the text of the tonsorial
Artistic studio!
'Tis the literal memorial
Of what you've come to know
As a kind of servile pantomime
In hope of some largesse,
You'll find it rife at Christmas time,
'Tis "Vive la politesse!"

A SUNDAY SILHOUETTE

SOME passengers on Sunday by the Subway and the
"L"
Are really so obnoxious that it's very hard to tell
Exactly which of them's the worse, for all are very
bad,
And apt to make their fellow man inordinately mad!
There's the youth who wears his hat awry, tiptilted on
his ear,
And stares at modest maidens with a confidential leer;
The urchin who will wipe his shoes, avoid him as you
may,

DESULTORY VERSE

On everybody's trousers in a most annoying way;
The man who thinks he's humorous, though no one
 knows just why,
And asks out loud if oysters are quite cold before they
 die!

The information gentleman, who thinks he knows it all,
Insisting that the Battery must be the City Hall!
That irritating infant, who is never at his ease,
Unless he's climbing up on your or some one else's
 knees!

Old maidens who will talk and talk throughout the
 livelong day,
Though they've absolutely nothing worth mentioning
 to say!

The father with a quiverful of disagreeable boys,
Whose great delight is kicking up a most infernal
 noise!

The sporty chap with flashy clothes, and diamonds
 made of paste,
Who thinks his comic get-up shows the very best of
 taste,

And half a hundred others, whose peculiarities
Are quite as bad, or worse, perhaps, than every one of
 these,

So if you've no desire to meet this awful hippodrome,
You'd better spend your "Sunday out" at—home,
 sweet home!

DESULTORY VERSE

AVE, OYSTER

'Tis the month of the oyster! Well, I declare
I'd almost forgotten that scrumptious fare,
Still now it's September I'm fashion'bly proud
To think that at last this *bonne bouche* is allowed!
Let me see! Shall I have them 'scaloped or fried?
Though they're tasty, when creamed, it can't be denied,
And they make a tit-bit delicious, when roast,
With some pepper and salt, and butter on toast!
Add cinnamon, cloves, some mace and allspice,
They're considered to be uncommonly nice!
Or, as a start off, I've a good mind to try
How they seem to appeal, when baked in a pie!
No! though frillings like these are all very well,
I think I prefer them just on the half shell,
With lemon, horse-radish, a bumper of stout,
They'll fit the occasion I haven't a doubt!
Cooked or plain, what matters? They're all on a par,
Come, hurry up, waiter! Aha! here they "R!"

DREAMFUL EYES

"I WONDER what on earth you're thinking
With eyes so very keenly twinkling?
Of novels, cooking books and sonnets,
Of gloves and of the latest bonnets?
Maybe, of castles in the air,
A lover, who's a millionaire,
An English lord with £. s. d.
Of nothing, p'raps — or p'raps, of me?
Tell me, oh! tell me what you dream?"
She answered in two words — "Ice cream!"

DESULTORY VERSE

L'AMERICAINE IN PAREE

Now away to gay Paree!
"Parlez-vous Francais — mais oui!"
She just knows the A. B. C.
If she cannot speak it, she
 Can read it!
You may smile and you may twit,
She won't mind a little bit,
Hear her talk with native grit,
"Donnez-moi le — what is it?
 I need it!"

"Black and red is rouge et noir!
See you later's au revoir!
Good-night — yes, I know — bon soir!
We must tip — ah! that's pour boire —
 Like princes!"

Chatter, chatter! on she flows,
Though she speak it through her nose,
She's l'Americaine — it goes!
For her independent pose
 Convinces!

HEY, MONEY, MONEY!

SIGH no more, chappies, sigh no more!
Girls were deceivers ever.
You'll meet a score down by the shore,
 To one man constant never!
Then do not sigh, or be the fly
 That dabbles in the honey,
But just translate their loving cry
 Into hey, money, money!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE FOGY ON THE FOURTH

I AM going far away
 To-day,
Where I won't hear any noise
 Of boys
Celebrating in a vein
 Insane
An event that I have heard
 Occurred
Some few paltry years ago,
 Or so!
Why the dickens they invest
 Their nest
Of minutely hoarded cash
 In trash,
Which can only end in smoke,
 'S a joke
That I really fail to see.
 Ah, me!
There were times in days gone by
 When I
Used to play the very same
 Fool game,
But — see there! Why, that's great!
 And wait,
There's another rocket — Shoo!
 Now who
Calls me a traitor, eh?
 For, say,
I'm a staunch old patriot yet,
 You bet!

DESULTORY VERSE

A SUMMER BOARDING HOUSE

THERE'S nothing like a boarding house to study character,

Though captious criticising won't in any way deter
The various individuals from being what they are,
For all of them imagine they are hitched on to a star!
The corpulent old lady, who's so glad she is alive,
Although it's very evident she eats enough for five!
The humming girl with a motif of awful dissonance,
The old maid with a plethora of personal romance!
Her neighbor, aet. 54, who's jealous as can be,
The woman with her life absorbed in tattle and Bohea!
The "jolly dog" with nose and face so very rubicund,
Who always has of repartee a most amusing fund!
The youth who gobbles up his food, and has a mouth
for pie,

The man who has dyspepsia, and thinks he's going to
die!

That nuisance of all nuisances, the female vocalist,
Who every single evening after dinner will insist
On singing all the comic songs to an admiring band
Of simpering young idiots, who say, "They're really
grand!"

And last of all, but not the least, the mistress of the
house,

Who of necessity must have a large amount of nous
To satisfy her boarders with imaginary ills
That everything will be all right,—if they'll but pay
their bills.

DESULTORY VERSE

COUNTRY SILENCE

THERE's silence in the country — m'yes!

I guess,

When bullfrogs snore and bullocks roar

No more,

When horses never neigh, or asses bray,

When cats don't caterwaul, mill streams don't fall,

Dogs do not bark, and katydids don't spark,

Or crickets chirp — the country will

Be still!

When cuckoos cease their senseless call,

And all

The flies are dead, maybe your head

In bed

You'll rest with perfect ease; no rooks on trees,

No cattle's low, no rooster's early crow,

No bleating lambs, no ans'ring baaing dams —

You'll be in the absence of that riot

Quiet!

THE DUENNA OF THE DUST

Do not dust my study, Mary,

I'm in meditative mood,

Why should you be so contrary,

And disturb my solitude?

I detest a broom and duster,

When I'm writing flowing verse,

Don't you know I've got to muster

All my wits to fill my purse?

In a way peculiar, Mary,

All my papers I have laid,

DESULTORY VERSE

If you touch them, it will vary
The arrangement I have made.

Yes, I know my desk is dusty,
And the chairs are grimy, too,
Yes, the air is very musty,
But, my Mary, go, please do!

Don't you understand these pages
I am writing are for you?
They'll bring money for your wages,
Ah! I thought so — *bon adieu!*

THE LAST ONE

WE struck it! Then we gasped with fright!
We might not get it, yet we might!
'Twas a conundrum, which to solve
A dubious problem did involve.
The wind was high — we gathered round,
And no one dared to make a sound.
We struck it! But with no result!
'Twas obstinate — in fact *non vult!*
We tried again, and took good care
Not to expose it to the air.
Suspense like this was hard to bear,
For we were miles from anywhere!
Another trial then we made,
While for a good result we prayed!
It lit! With joy we went insane!
It lit! And then went out again!
Curses like ours no man could hatch,
For it, you see, was our last match!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE FISH FAST

I THINK of the fish I must eat in Lent,
Of flounders and salmon and sole,
And I wonder if I shall be content
With a diet like this as a whole.

I haven't a doubt that haddock and shad,
And turbot and whiting and trout,
When eaten occasionally, aren't so bad,
While oysters are tasty with stout!

A bloater is good for a morning bite,
Or a little flaked cod with rice,
A lobster's the thing for a dev'lish night,
A herring for luncheon is nice.

And there's a reward for eating this food,
So the penance won't be in vain,
It's universally said to be good
For greatly increasing the brain!

To nurture the matter that's known as gray
Shall be my earnest endeavor,
So that, when we arrive at Easter Day,
Why, shan't I be awfully clever?

MARCH 31ST

WE'LL all play the fool as is seasonably fit,
And tricks from our ancestors borrow,
But why in the world can't some modern wit
Contrive a new lie for to-morrow?

DESULTORY VERSE

THE BROOKLYNITE'S FAREWELL

I'M going to New York, my dears, kiss me, and say
good-bye,
But, prithee, wipe away those tears, I would not have
you cry!
I hope that I'll be back to-night, if things don't go
amiss,
Though one can never tell, of course, in such a town
as this.
Some accidents upon the "L" will happen now and
then,
But matters will be remedied, though goodness knows
just when.
A block or two upon the Bridge I really do not mind,
Though I promise to be careful, if I see a train behind!
The crossing at the Park, no doubt, is scarcely safe to
take,
With cars ahead and cars behind, and others in their
wake.
The office elevator has been overhauled this week,
So there really is no danger, dears, at least none, so to
speak!
And, though I leave the office in the hours they call
the "rush,"
And certainly will have to bear the push and shove and
crush,
I'll try and save myself quite whole to welcome you
to-night,
It isn't very probable, but still with care I might!
Good-bye, my dears, just one last kiss, you're perfectly
secured,
If any accident occurs, for I am well insured,
And, if the worst does happen, an action then will lie,
Be sure to bring it, darlings, and get the cash — good-
bye!

DESULTORY VERSE

A PARADOXICAL PLAINT

It's muggy, or else it is freezing,
I've a cold and a frog in my throat,
I'm eternally coughing or sneezing,
And I can't get a good antidote!
It's really ridiculous folly
To talk about seasonable fun,
How can you expect to be jolly
With coal at six dollars a ton?
It's sleeting or hailing or snowing,
Or else the rain pours down in showers,
There's no human method of knowing
The changes in twenty-four hours!
But there! when the summer sun's shining,
I've not the least doubt I shall say
With a paradoxical pining,
"How I long for a good winter's day!"

BUT OH! THE DIFFERENCE

I LOVED a dark-haired girl last year,
I felt she was my fate,
I held that brunette very dear,
(Blondes I abominate!)

But, when I heard of her this year,
I really could have cried,
Excuse a paradox and tear!
The girl I loved had — dyed!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE SUMMER QUEEN

SOFTLY in classic rhyme
Now let us greet her,
For it is summertime,
And we shall meet her!
In this or other clime
No one can beat her!
Nulli secunda!

Do not describe her dress,
Not if you're able,
Leave all such prettiness
For women's babel;
Mere man can only guess
At things unstable!
Lusus naturae!

Will she choose you or me?
Who'll be her hero?
Will all our pleadings be
Dashed down to zero?
Maybe, myself I'll see
(*Dum spiro spero*)
Facile princeps!

Who'll be the one to cross
Pons asinorum?
Who'll spend on her his dross
More majorum?
Who knows, for she's the boss—
Satis verborum!
Vivat regina!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE SMALL BOY ON A CAR

How merrily, how cheerily, we spend our Sunday out!
All inconveniences here and there good-naturedly we
scout!

It is really quite a pleasure to hang upon a strap,
Or share a seat considerately in someone else's lap!
We do not mind experiences like these, but I do bar
That exasperating nuisance — the small boy on a car!

He isn't quite a baby, and he isn't quite a child,
But he has reached an awkward age, and makes you
very wild

By loudly saying, "Ma, what's that?" while pointing
straight at you,

As if you were some specimen just purchased for the
Zoo!

I'm not a bit malicious, but I'd rather meet by far
A crowd of rowdy hoodlums than the small boy on the
car!

He knocks my cane down on the ground, he jumps
upon my shoe,

I'd like to whip the little brat till he was black and
blue,

He asks all sorts of questions with an irritating
"why?"

And, if he's told to hold his tongue, he's pretty sure
to cry!

Pandora's box did not contain a torment on a par
With this autocratic youngster — the small boy on a
car!

Maybe — I can't imagine it — I was the same as he,
But, if I was, I'll bet my sire would take me on his
knee,

DESULTORY VERSE

And stop that little nonsense with a slipper or a slat,
But, bless your heart, these modern days the parents
don't do that!
The children now come in the world 'neath quite a
different star,
And so we are obliged to bear — the small boy on a
car!

ASK ME NO MORE

Ask me no more! I cannot loan you ten.
You'd merely gamble it upon a horse.
The surest ever? *Cela va* — of course!
You would repay it? Echo answers, "When?"
Ask me no more!

Ask me no more! This awful incubus
Of daily work won't let me go away.
This year I shan't have any holiday.
For me 'twill simply be *in urbe rus*!
Ask me no more!

Ask me no more! Another glass of wine
Would surely set me standing on my head.
I feel that I'd be better off in bed,
So, my dear boy, I really must decline.
Ask me no more!

Ask me no more! Still, as you have appealed
So strongly to good-fellowship, perhaps
I will take just a little drop of Schnapps, —
But, if for once I very weakly yield,
Ask me no more!

DESULTORY VERSE

A HOLIDAY HERO

Now he is coming back
From his vacation
With an enormous stack
Of information!
Anecdotes by the score
Into your ear he'll pour.
He is the greatest bore
In all creation!

Quite half of what he says
Is iteration,
Yet he can talk for days
Without cessation!
Tell you of table d'hotes,
Drives, rides and sailing boats,
Dotted with various notes
Of admiration!

Oh, the wild yarns he'll weave
Of some flirtation,
Which you may well believe
With hesitation,
What he did, where he went,
What lots of cash he spent,
Now back without a cent —
Same old collation!

Best not to take much heed
Of his narration,
For his tales always need
Verification!
Would he but always stay
On a long holiday!
No! there he comes this way!
Oh, botheration!

DESULTORY VERSE

THEN AND NOW

ST. VALENTINE! St. Valentine!
Why are you so modern now?
Where is that motto, "Oh, be mine!"
Where are those pinky colored hearts
Transfixed with little Cupid's darts?
Where are the arrows and bow?

Something has changed you, St. Valentine,
From what you were wont to be;
Why is it that you will incline
To all those very expensive things,
Glove bags of satin, and belts and rings?
It's quite a puzzle to me!

For times are hard, St. Valentine,
And, though we've loves as of old,
We really have got to draw the line.
These baubles may look extremely nice,
But we can't afford to pay the price
At which they're usually sold!

Come back, come back, St. Valentine,
And resume your former place,
For, though these presents are very fine,
We miss the good old-fashioned time,
When amorous bards burst into rhyme
On flimsy pieces of lace!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE HAPPY MAN OF MEDICINE

Now he's every reason
To enjoy himself,
For it is the season
When he makes his pelf!
Happy, happy doctor,
Man of pains and ills,
How he does rejoice in
Piling up his bills!

When the snowflakes flurry
From the curdled sky,
See him in a hurry
To his patients fly!
Grip, catarrh, bronchitis,
Something all the time,
That the flesh is heir to
In this beastly clime!

When the wind is blowing
With a northeast blast,
And there is no knowing
How long it will last,
That's a strain of music
To him very sweet,
Frost and ice will tumble
People off their feet!

As *festina lente*
Is no native cry,
Broken bones in plenty
Make his charges high!

DESULTORY VERSE

Shekels upon shekels
In his purse will flow,
Happy, happy doctor,
Happy medico!

THE TRAIN TALKERS

MRS. JONES meets Mrs. Brown
On a train that comes downtown,
Dwell upon their own affairs,
Tell each other all their cares,
Talk of little John and Jane,
How the baby has a pain,
Say that Monday was so wet
Haven't done their washing yet.
No! they'll never, never eat
Any more of that canned meat!
Mrs. B. is glad to say
She has met "dear Mrs. J."
Mrs. J. is equally
Charmed to see "sweet Mrs. B."
Mrs. J. and Mrs. B.
In all probability
Are still telling all their woes,
Arguing about their clo's,
Never will have had their say
Not until the Judgment Day,
And even then it really looks
As if they'd be two babbling spooks!

DESULTORY VERSE

FISH AND FAST

JULIA was fashionably devout.
Julia was getting very stout.
So Julia thought, as it was Lent,
She'd stint her flesh to some extent.
She positively wouldn't eat
The veriest particle of meat, —
Truly and honestly she'd fast
Until the forty days were past.
There was, in this event, one dish
For Julia left, and that was fish!
Religiously she then began
To carry out her banting plan.
She dabbled in an oyster stew,
Of smelts she took a generous few,
A luscious salmon next she had,
And then a very tasty shad.
Flaked cod accompanied by rice
She found to be extremely nice.
If she had supper late at night,
A lobster stayed her appetite!
Turbot and herrings, whiting, sole,
And terrapin (with monopoly!) —
She tried them all, but, strange to say,
Julia grew fatter every day!
And, when her abstinence was done,
Her waist line measured forty-one!
'Twixt fish and fast it would appear
A kind of paradox is here,
Which shows a moral — if you wish
To live in Lent on naught but fish,
Be sure that you are quite averse
To food like that, or you'll get worse!
Don't be too fashionably devout,
Or, maybe, you will get too stout!

DESULTORY VERSE

MODES

You read in the papers just now
That fashions are changing in hair,
And one is expected to bow
(Though one doesn't really much care,
For man's not considered somehow)
To what is considered the style,
And bound to look happy, though inwardly snappy
At what may elicit a smile!

Of pompadours there's not a trace,
(A thing I could never abide),
But a Grecian coiffure takes its place
With the fluffiness now on the side,
Which 'tis thought will undoubtedly grace
That much maligned Directoire frock,
Which, being Parisian, of course is Elysian,
Though wonted, if *outré*, to shock!

From the forehead must hang a large gem,
And a fillet of ribbon is nice,
Or of diamonds a small diadem,
That is, if you don't mind the price!
That's all I can think of *pro tem*.
Though there must be egrets and sprays,
And fixings bizarre, which undoubtedly are
In touch with the old "Empire" days!

You will find this style coincide
With the new sartorial craze
Of skirts very *bouffant* — that's wide! —
Which recall the crinoline days,
And until these fancies subside
You'll notice each social queen
Will say they are sweeter and better, and neater
Then ever before have been seen!

DESULTORY VERSE

ON THE WAY TO STATEN ISLAND

A MAN from New York city lay sleeping on the boat,
And from his nose at intervals came forth full many
a note,
Till a policeman came beside him, while wrapped in
slumber sweet,
And bent o'er him with lifted club to hit him on the
feet.
The sleepy man woke up at last, while he was being
"fanned,"
And said, "What is the matter, for it isn't time to
land?
I wish to goodness, officer, that you would let me be,
For I'm going to Staten Island, Staten Island by the
sea!"

The cop, he smiled a sickly smile, and gave the man
a shake,
"If you're going to Staten Island, you must keep quite
wide awake,
Those are my latest orders, though the cause I do not
know,
You mustn't slumber on the boat, as you go to and
fro.
Maybe pickpockets are about, who're apt to steal your
purse,
Maybe the reason's something, sir, which is quite the
reverse.
I've got to carry out the rule, don't put the blame on
me,
When you're going to Staten Island, Staten Island by
the sea!"

DESULTORY VERSE

Up rose that man in fury, and he stomped the deck
in rage,
Then pointed to a statue: "Say, is this the boasted
age
Of liberty, equality, fraternity? Great Scott!
One does not quite know nowadays what one may do
or not!
Go, give my warmest compliments to his Honor, our
good Mayor,
And tell him for this latest rule I surely do not care!
I'll see them all in — somewhere — first — to sleep I
will be free,
When I'm going to Staten Island, Staten Island by
the sea!"

His voice grew faint and fainter, for he was extremely
tired,
And as it wasn't likely in the water he'd be fired,
He let his weary head fall back, and took another
snooze,
The while he muttered, "This is but a case of 'if I
choose!'"
The policeman sighed: "I'll chance it, though I'm put
upon the shelf,
He won't wake up, and so, I think, I'll go to sleep
myself!"
And that's the best way out of it, I fancy you'll agree,
When going to Staten Island, Staten Island by the
sea!

DESULTORY VERSE

AN OLD TIME CHRISTMAS DAY

BRANCH and twig encased in ice,
Drooping 'neath a starry sky,
Held within a frigid vise,
While the wind with eerie sigh
Sweeps the boughs in close embrace,
Knitted in a white array,
Like a film of snowy lace —
'Tis an old time Christmas Day!

Brittle drops in clusters shine
As a jewelled coronet,
And the frosted ivy vine
Twines around its amourette!
From the grass in sparkling light
Myriad rainbow hues are given,
Oh! there is no lovelier sight,
Though there may be more in Heaven!

SEASHORE RESOLUTIONS

I SWEAR — (I'm now upon the shore) —
I swear to clasp thy hand no more!
I swear — (I still am by the sea) —
I swear to keep my eyes off thee!
I swear my lips shall never seek
The powdered haven of thy cheek!
I swear — (at least when by the ocean) —
I swear no frenzied deep emotion
Shall flow and throb within my breast!
I swear — (Oh, well! you know the rest) —
I swear as sure as I was born —
She comes! I swear I naught have sworn!

DESULTORY VERSE

A SEASHORE BAND

HAVE you listened to a band
Play on the shore?
There upon a covered stand
'Mid ocean's roar
They will mangle song and dance
To a degree
That you think you'd like to chance
Felo de se!
Andante, a little slow,
They commence,
Then some bars *adagio*
With tone intense!
Piccolo takes up the air
Dolcemente,
Flute, of course, must have its share,
Piu lente!
Trumpets, too, will have their fling
Fortissimo!
Now together with a swing,
Bravissimo!
Clash the cymbals, bang the drum
Con fragore!
Every instrument has some
Of the glory!
In a smashing fiendish row
All is over,
And the leader makes his bow,
Quite in clover!
Yes, of every summer ill,
With which we're cursed,
This completely fills the bill,—
'Tis far the worst!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE PYRE. SEPTEMBER 15.

COMPANION of my summer days, I'm through
 With you!
Now comes the parting of our ways. Adieu!
 In lieu
I don what's called a "bowler" hat; the code
 Of mode
Obliges me to make the change, though I
 Am shy
Of the exchange — *noblesse oblige*, you know —
 And so
(I hate to realize the fact) you pass
 Alas!
Into the hands or on the head of some
 Poor bum,
Who'll wear you till December next. Too bad!
 'Tis sad
To send you to a wretched fate like that,
 My hat,
But what to do? I have a happy thought!
 From naught
Or almost naught you came, now you shall go,
 Chapeau,
To naught again — a match serves for your urn,
 So burn!
We're comrades now, absorbed — d'you see the joke? —
 In smoke!

A TOBACCO HEART

I MIGHT have wed, but realized
 What married life might mean,
And so I but idealized
 My Lady Nicotine!

DESULTORY VERSE

MY SON AND I

My eldest son is five feet four,
And I'm but five feet three,
And day by day he sprouts up more,
Why should this difference be?
Oh, you may laugh! It isn't fun
To have the little boys
Call him the pa, and me the son,
And ask me 'bout my toys!
I grow a beard, and think, perchance,
I shall look older then,
For surely whiskers will enhance
My age by nearly ten.
But no! although the hairs are gray,
And show I am, in truth,
Much older than what people say,
I still look quite a youth!
And, oh! my son, he is so tall,
It really is too bad,
Without respect — I am so small —
He calls me "Little Dad!"
He ridicules my boyish looks
In every way he can,
And says the child, in copy books,
Is father to the man!
In this, in that he is my peer,
In looks, in education,
And, though I'm proud of him, I fear
He'll be my ruination!

DESULTORY VERSE

PEACE

I HAVE to spend a day, the doctor said,
In bed.
I only need a little rest and quiet
With diet
To make myself the man I was before
Once more.
In bed! Can you imagine my delight?
I might
Indulge in all the peacefulness of life!
My wife
Will tend to all my wants, and will not say
To-day
“Get up! It’s time for breakfast — striking eight —
You’re late!”
Ah, no! Good-bye to all my business cares.
Affairs
That seemed important yesterday
I lay
Aside without a thought — do what I please
At ease!
No need to run and catch in way insane
A train,
No typewriter, no office boy, no clerk,
No work,
But only twittering birds to listen to!
Say, who
On earth can tell me any greater bliss
Than this?

LASTING GRATITUDE

I WOULD that I could join the ranks
Of those who write “Declined with thanks,”
I’m only thankful once a year,
While they are always ’twould appear!

DESULTORY VERSE

EXIT DEA

NEW YORK's going out of town!
She, with many a hat and gown,
Flies to add to her renown

For spending!

What with francs in gay Paree,
And in London £. s. d.,
Her largesse is sure to be
Unending!

To tradition she will cling,
See, while on her annual fling,
Everybody, everything,

Worth seeing!

'Spite a furtive smile and stare
Foreigners will all declare
They have never seen so fair
A being!

Criticism she'll invite,
As a newborn goddess might,
And her critics will be quite

De-lighted!

Then, when home, she'll tempt the fates,
Saying promptly that she rates
Best of all the various States
Th' United!

CALLING THE ROLL

TELL me not of the blackbird and robin,
Or of the fisherman's float a-bobbin',
You've forgotten one most important thing,
Which to me is the surest sign of spring!
You can hear it at present throughout the land,
The music (ye gods!) of a German band!

DESULTORY VERSE

THEY NEVER WOULD BE MISSED

ON the surface and the "L" cars these nuisances are
found,

I've got a little list! I've got a little list!

Of all those known offenders who might well be under-
ground,

And who never would be missed — who never would
be missed!

There's the youth who holds a cigarette that hasn't
yet gone out,

And the damsel who eats peanuts and throws the shells
about.

The person who sits sideways, on the bias as it were,
The dude who tries to fascinate the ladies with his
stare,

That most irritating nuisance, the babbling bicyclist!
They'd none of them be missed! They'd none of
them be missed!

There's the man who chews tobacco, and then ex-
pectorates,

The would-be humorist — I've got him on the list!
The lover and his sweetheart, who whisper and make
dates,

They never would be missed! They never would be
missed!

Then the idiot who whistles, the girls who smirk and
smile,

The woman with a bundle, who will shift it all the
while,

The mothers with sweet babies, who squall for blocks
and blocks,

The Wall Street man who loudly talks of bulls and
bears and stocks,

DESULTORY VERSE

The child who asks fool questions, and never will
desist,

I don't think she'd be missed! I'm sure she'd not
be missed!

The golfer with his dialect, and the idol of the day,
The automobilist — I've got him on the list!

The fiend who has a parapluie and sticks it in the way,
They'd none of them be missed! They'd none of
them be missed!

The vixen who's been shopping and the hoydens chew-
ing gum,

All those who've had a plethora of lager beer and
rum,

The maiden who invariably will catch the money
strap,

And the lady who is fleshy, and flops upon your lap, —
And there are scores of others you can put upon
the list,

For they'd none of them be missed! They'd none of
them be missed!

AN EXAGGERATED AND MENDACIOUS STATEMENT NOT WARRANTED BY THE FACTS

LITTLE Jack Horner
Sat in a corner
On the Subway, when there was a jam.
He jumped to his feet,
Gave a lady his seat!
(I'm a liar? I own it! I am!)

DESULTORY VERSE

TOUJOURS L'AMOUR

You ask me how to write of love!
First take your pen and paper,
Then call Erato from above,
You'll soon ignite "love's taper!"
Recall that phrase at times — it's good —
And don't forget "remember,"
When you're in a poetic mood,
Will rhyme with "sweet September!"
If "locks" or "hair" you wish to "bind,"
The word to use is "tresses,"
It comes in handy for the wind
"To kiss it with caresses!"
With "leas" and "trees" you might combine
The "blue Alsatian mountains,"
They'll fit in with a "sheltering pine,"
And "Cytherean fountains!"
Work in "the nightingale" at times,
And talk of love "like Circe's,"
And let "the breeze blow through" your rhymes,
And "waves leap o'er" your verses!
For women "languishing soft eyes"
Are really quite entrancing,
And, should you mention "azure skies,"
They won't think you're romancing!
Blend "waves" and "laves," and "wines" and
"vines,"
And recollect "the myrtle,"
"Forget-me-nots" and "jessamines,"
And "doves," of course "the turtle!"
If you use proper names, don't mind
A wrong accentuation,
And foreign phrases always find
The reader's approbation!

DESULTORY VERSE

That's all I know, or ever knew,
Now take my word and heed it,
Don't write of love, but, if you do,
Don't ask me, please, to read it!

THE BEST RESOLUTION

I'M not a slat,
Verbum sat!
I'll wear a hat,
High or flat,
Don't need these tips
About my hips,
Do what I choose
With my shoes,
And fix my hair
Just as I care!
I will not squeeze
My waist to please
The public sight,
And be a fright,
In fact I shall
Be natural!

THE ONE CONSTANT FRIEND

GONE are the friends whom once I knew,
Those friends of olden days,
I thought at least some would be true,
But parted are our ways.
All, all are gone save one, that shows
How constancy endears,
My watch! — it never, never goes,
It hasn't gone for years!

DESULTORY VERSE

VADE MECUM OF THE LITERARY CONDENSER

If you wish in the world to advance
In a literary sort of a way,
You must follow the fashion,
And bow to the passion
That's rife amongst authors to-day.
Get hold of an early romance,
As clever as clever can be,
Then boldly revise it,
That is, "bowdlerize" it,
And you'll jump to the top of the tree!

For example, take "Vanity Fair,"
And correct all the old-fashioned trash,
Then cut it and slash it,
And modernly mash it
Into some sort of seasonable hash!
Then call it — that is, if you dare,
"Becky Sharp" or a similar name,
The matter's not vital,
But give it a title,
Which shows that the book is the same!

With "Pickwick" and "Dombey and Son"
Your course is as plain as can be,
There's nothing that suits
The latter like "Toots,"
While Sam Weller will do — with a "We!"
And, when your condensing is done,
How much farther you'll go, who can tell?
You capture the glory
Of any old story,
Why not call yourself author as well?

DESULTORY VERSE

PANDORA'S MUSIC BOX

WHEN of old Pandora opened her box,
The torments and ills flew out in flocks.
There must have been toothache and headache, too,
Lumbago, and grip, and tic-doloureux,
Measles and mumps, with fever and chills,
Needing a vast assortment of pills!
All sorts of worries, misfortunes and pain,
Which cannot be bottled up again.
But the very worst I am sure you will say,
Especially after a holiday,
Is the reiteration everywhere
Of the latest awful popular air!

AGAIN!

“OH, frabjous day! Calloo! Callay!”
Out comes the April sun,
The lark trills high, the swallows fly,
(Soon now the hot cross bun!)
The blithe bee hums, and baseball comes,
The leaves are on the trees,
The curly lambs frisk by their dams,
(Not dreaming of green peas!)
The daisies peep, and rhubarb's cheap,
Spring onions now are ripe,
With rustic glee, and “twist,” maybe,
The shepherd fills his pipe!
This is the strain I sing again
With sentimental wit,
A bard, you know, *must* write just so,
For *nascitur, non fit!*

DESULTORY VERSE

FLAT FANCIES

WHERE shall I move to on May the first,
And what do I think will be my address?
In names of apartments I'm so immersed
That my destination you'll have to guess.

For I've been to the Clarissa,
I've looked at the Melissa,
I've visited the Dorothy, the Lily and the Rose.
I've rambled through Mount Pleasant,
And an oblong, called The Crescent,
And how many more with pretty names, well, goodness only knows!

I saw a dream, yclept "La Belle,"
A perfect "bird," named Hironnelle,
An Ellersley, an Iroquois, and then a Maisonette,
Tecumseh seemed a perfect name,
And Mohawk quite the crème de crème,
And what could be more beautiful than Marie Antoinette?

I've sampled scores of Endicotts,
And one or two Forget-me-nots,
Some Stuyvesants, and Washingtons, and Shakespeares quite a heap,
A Pocahontas was a gem,
I even saw a Bethlehem,
And all kinds of varieties enough to make you weep!

I haven't given up the chase,
For I've just seen a Bouillabaisse,

DESULTORY VERSE

And I shouldn't be surprised if there's a Hippodrome,
But among these appellations,
And their fierce concatenations,
I haven't up to date found any "Home, Sweet
Home!"

TOO PREVIOUS

WINTER is over — spring is beginning!
That's what the hackneyed bards are now singing,
But, I fancy, that all these poet-asters
Are far from excellent weather forecasters!
Of botany, doubtless, they know a lot,
But their lines on climate are simple rot!
They always begin to rush into rhyme
Quite a month or so before the right time,
And, were we to listen to what they say,
There'd be the deuce and the doctor to pay!

EXALTED MODESTY

THEY went up in an aeroplane,
He and his beauteous bride,
And presently as if in pain
She somewhat deeply sighed.

"What do you want?" he softly asked.
"What do I want?" With mirth,
That fright but very slightly masked,
She said, "I want the earth!"

DESULTORY VERSE

THE TUNE OF THE THESPIAN

If you should chance to meet
A man upon the street,
Who'd be your boon companion in a glass,
Who hasn't got a cent
To pay his board or rent,
You'd best take my advice, and let him pass!
He'll buttonhole you, sure,
For quite an hour or more,
And talk to you of managers and acts,
Commissions and the like,
And 'bout a coming strike,
And swear he knows the very inside facts!
He'll make you quite believe
He's something up his sleeve,
Which "really is, old man, the very best
That ever yet was seen,
Such a thing has never been,
Immense, deah boy!" and — well, you know the
rest!
Perhaps to you he'll sing
Some awful ragtime thing
'Bout Babes and Venuses of Chocolate,
And tell you "don'tcherknow?"
That sort of song must go,
Because it's quite the thing, and up to date.
But, when HE turns to go,
(Trust him for this — *I* know!)
With bland-like smile assuredly he'll say,
If you've got a dollar bill,
He's quite convinced you will
Oblige him with a loan for just a day!
But don't you give him one,
Don't do, or you'll be done,

DESULTORY VERSE

And be considered quite an easy chap
By that marauding ring,
Who somehow seem to cling
To that well known Rialto—*verbum sap.*!

NOTHING TO DO

THE call of the country? A fig for its flurries,
Leave me to bask 'neath a zenith of blue
In a city of commerce, where every one hurries,
Though I've got my freedom, and nothing to do!

The call of the seashore? There's too much employ-
ment.
It may have its pleasures, but those I pooh-pooh!
In bathing and sailing I find no enjoyment,
They're quite inconsistent with nothing to do!

The call of the mountains? There's too much exertion
In climbing to see a most gorgeous view.
And am I not right when I make the assertion
It's not in accordance with nothing to do?

'Tis all in ourselves we are joyous or sorry,
You'll find the old dramatist's dictum is true,
Let me stay here at home without any worry,
And a blissful reflection I've nothing to do!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE PASSING OF THE PIE

I SAW it at the pastrycook's,
A sweet, delicious apple pie,
I bought it for its luscious looks,
I really couldn't pass it by.
The crust seemed very crisp and light,
'Twas such a dream as there it lay,
I would have tried a sample bite,
Had I not torn myself away!
I told the man to send it up,
"Please just as quickly as could be,"
We'd eat it, when we took a cup
At six o'clock of evening tea.
Six came and went, but not the pie,
We knew not what to think or say,
We couldn't guess the reason why,
Unless it was a Saturday.
The clock struck eight and nine and ten,
Eleven, twelve — 'twas very queer!
We went to bed, and wondered when
That pie was likely to appear.
Next day I went round to the store
To very naturally complain,
Why it had not been sent before,
But there was little to explain.
The boy, they said, had taken it
That very selfsame afternoon,
If I would kindly wait a bit,
The lad would be there very soon.
I waited and I saw the youth,
He hesitated once or twice,
And then confessed the honest truth,
He'd eaten it — it looked so nice!

DESULTORY VERSE

And, though a tear stood in his eye,
The boy I really couldn't blame,
So luscious was that apple pie,
I think I would have done the same!

WATER WARNING

SPRINKLE, sprinkle, water cart;
How I wonder where thou art.
Never can I find thee nigh,
When the dust is flying high.

When the streets with rain are wet,
Thou are certain to be met,
Then, of course, thy stream's in sight,
Sprinkling, sprinkling, left and right.

When I'm dressed up in my best,
That's the time thy power to test,
Then thou tak'st a sudden cue,
Deluging me through and through.

Thou'rt a warning to me, p'r'aps,
To stop drinking beer and schnapps,
So I'll choose the wisest part,
I'll get on thee, water cart.

DESULTORY VERSE

HOLIDAY HINTS

If you're anxious for to know how to live quite *comme
il faut*,

When it's ninety in the shade,
You will get a sure protection from every known af-
fection,

If these precepts are obeyed.
You mustn't smoke, it's heating, and if a friend you're
greeting,

Don't drink, but try Bohea,
Or there may be no telling, if beer you will be spelling
With an "i" and not an "e!"

And, when you hear them say,
"Dear me, it's hot to-day!"
You'll have the satisfaction by masterly inaction
Of keeping cool away!

You must take your pleasure sadly, and not go rushing
madly

To see the local sights,
But determine to be happy in a state serene and nappy,
As the temperature invites.

You must cultivate simplicity and in true domesticity
Take a genuine delight,

Or, if you're not a married man, you'll find it is the
coolest plan

To leave your love — and write!
And she will surely say
On an awfully sizzling day,
"I really think it's very wise, considering the heat and
flies,
For him to keep away!"

DESULTORY VERSE

Of self-control this is a test, but mind you give your-
self a rest,
And other people, too!
Forget yourself, that's if you can, and cultivate a hue
of tan,
For all the best men do!
And a la mode monstrosities like Panama atrocities
Just throw them to old Nick;
Make friends with every one you meet, though have a
care they don't repeat
That game of the golden brick!
And there's no doubt you'll say
On the very hottest day
"I've found an explanation how to take a real vacation
In a comfortable way!"

THE REJECTED SMOKER

You must go, my cherished pipe,
For you are a bit too ripe,
I surmise.
From your stem I often blew
Clouds of smoke until you grew
Like her eyes!

Now upon the mantel still
You perpetually will
Pass each day,
And I hear that she herself
Also is upon the shelf,
Hip, Hooray!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE UNCROWNED QUEEN.

MARY ELIZA BETSEY SMITH
Thought woman's rights were not a myth!
Her life had only just begun,
She'd reached the age of twenty-one.
She would not marry — no! not she!
She'd rather independent be.
She said that love was balderdash,
But being very short of cash,
And having no old rich relation,
She had to take a situation.
A dry goods' store she first essayed,
Although she rather balked at trade,
Here she was treated like a slave,
Until she'd one foot in the grave.
She gave that up, and blossomed forth
In something fitted for her worth.
Companion to a lady then
With salary increased to ten.
Ah! this was really very good,
She'd lots of cash and lots of food,
But here again 'twas very plain
She'd heaps of reason to complain.
For, ever at her mistress' call,
She really was no one at all!
Maybe, above the servant maid,
But that was all that could be said.
One day she woke up to the fact
That there was something still she lacked
To gain the liberty she craved,
If woman's rights were to be saved.
Her trammels quickly off she shook,
And straightway took a place as cook!

DESULTORY VERSE

And now it is her vaunted boast
She rules the mistress, house and roast!
She bosses all, and that's the pith
Of woman's rights — says Mary Smith!

NOTHING

WHAT meant you by that look of love,
Those whispered vows “by stars above,”
That tender pressure of my glove?
Nothing?

What meant you, when that lock of hair
You snipped, and placed with tender care
Upon your heart, or somewhere there?
Nothing?

What meant you by that stolen kiss,
Which you declared was “heavenly bliss”?
What meant you, pray, by all of this?
Nothing?

What meant I when you acted so,
And asked me something, sweet and low?
What meant I by my answer, “No”?
Nothing!

DESULTORY VERSE

PROLOGUE TO A FAIR

PERCHANCE it is no task of mine
To write a Prologue to this Fair,
Perchance, if asked, I might decline,
If I were sure you would be there!
Prologues, you'll say, are out of date,
Of nonsense they're the very essence,
And this deserves no better fate,
If it will not command your presence.
To beg is a prerogative
Most poets have — you'll not deny it —
They live to write and write to live,
So in your kindness don't decry it!
I'll introduce you in these bowers,
And leave you to the tender mercies
Of ladies whose persuasive powers
Are just as sweet and soft as Circe's!
You won't be sorry that you came,
For you will buy a score of presents,
Fit for your friends — 'tis just the same,
Whether they're English peers or peasants!
You'll see some curiosities,
Which space prevents me from describing,
You'll quench your animosities,
If wise, by now and then imbibing
A cup of coffee or of tea,
(Such fare as this you'll find quite handy),
Or, if your nerves can't stand Bohea,
You might try cakes, ice cream, or candy!
In fact, there's everything you need,
And, if you'll waste but half an hour,
You'll find you've sown a goodly seed,
Which later on will bud and flower.

DESULTORY VERSE

Enough of Prologues; there's an end
To all these superficial verses,
My halting lines are meant to tend
To make you ope your hearts and — purses!

PURELY CIRCUMSTANTIAL

Oh! blame not the girl who is queen of the summer
And pledges her troth to a dozen or more,
The dude, and the clerk, the merchant and mummer,
For an artist like her deserves an encore!
And blame not the man from sobriety straying,
Who clings to a lamp post, or telegraph pole,
He has this excuse — he is only displaying
A “circumstance over which he's no control!”

Oh! blame not the butcher who raises his prices
And your ardor for meat most successfully damps,
One generous virtue excuses his vices,
He gives you a double allowance of stamps!
And blame not the man who says that to-morrow
He'll repay that loan — he will, 'pon his soul!
If he fails in his promise, well, that to his sorrow
Is a “circumstance over which he's no control!”

Oh! blame not the husband who's left in the city,
If loneliness makes him despondent and sad,
Though outwardly he may be worthy of pity,
Yet inwardly he is consumedly glad!
And blame not the bard if his verses are prosy
And move with a steadily slumberous roll,
The fact that he makes all his readers quite dozy
Is a “circumstance over which he's no control!”

DESULTORY VERSE

TAMMANY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little, for I'm in a mournful
state;
Leave me here, and till I call you, let me calmly meditate.
This the place and all around it, as of old, the Simons
pure
Seeking favors and positions that would be a sinecure!
Tammany, that in the distance overlooks the City Hall,
While the crying need of office now and then begins
to pall!
Many a night I've seen the Pleiades, when I've looked
upon the wine,
Braided up in such a tangle that all liquor I'd decline!
Here about the rooms I've wandered, nourishing the
youths sublime
With the fairy tales of office, which will surely come in
time!
When I dipt into the future, far as human eye could
see,
Saw the vision of the graft, and all the profit there
would be!
In the Fall a fuller color comes upon the Tiger's
breast!
In the Fall reform will surely take a well deserved
rest!
In the Fall with great bravado we will cut a livelier
dash!
In the Fall the young brave's fancy instantly will turn
to cash!
His assurance then was boundless—how he got it we
all asked,
While in smiles of peers and princes he magnificently
basked!

DESULTORY VERSE

And we said, "Ah! tell us, Croker — speak, and speak
the truth to us,
Trust us, Chieftain, let us share it, and we will not
care a cuss!"
Then he turned, his bosom shaken — well, you know
how he can look,
When on his return from Europe he brings renegades
to book!
Saying, "I have hid the secret, I will hide it still for
aye!"
Saying, "Quite sufficient for you is the boodle of to-
day!"
Oh, our Croker, shallow-hearted! Oh, our Croker,
ours no more!
Oh, the Club erstwhile so crowded, never now as 'twas
before.
Louder than the loudest trumpet, harsh as harshest
ophicleide,
Shall our objurgations reach you, smiling on the other
side!
Is it well to wish you happy? Having known you we
decline,
'Midst nobility we leave you in your glory to repine!
They will hold you, when your presence shall have
spent its novel force
Little better than an expert of a champion dog or
horse!
What is that? He is relenting? Don't believe it!
Oh, no, no!
He's already said his farewell very many months ago.
He will answer to the purpose, living in another land!
Better he were building dairies than the leader of our
band!
Better we should have a Sheppard or a Devery for
our fate!

DESULTORY VERSE

Better Sport, Two Spot and Joke! Yes, better a tri-
umvirate!
Cursed be the social wants that win away a democrat!
Cursed be the poms alluring! Cursed be th' aristo-
crat!
Cursed be the maladies that made you take a frequent
change!
Cursed be the ancient moat, and cursed be the mouldy
Grange!
Oh, 'tis well that we should bluster — much we're like
to make of that —
And, maybe — there is no knowing — we are talking
through our hat!
Shall it not be scorn for us to harp on such a great
has-been?
We are shamed through all our nature for our weak-
ness to be seen!
Weakness to be wroth with weakness! Party weak-
ness! There's the rub!
Oh, for just another Croker, and for just another
Club!
We're the lesser men — we know it — all his influence
matched with ours
Is as China was defying all the other mighty powers!
Fools! again the futile fancy, and we know our words
are wild,
Oh, that Pelion in November will not be on Ossa piled!
Comes a warning o'er the ocean — we have heard those
tones of old —
And it makes the very marrow of our shaking bones
grow cold!
See! it falls upon the Wigwam — "Figureheads may
come and go,
I'm your Chief, although at present I am merely 'lying
low!'"

DESULTORY VERSE

SMITH

ON island, on continents — this is no myth —
Wherever I wander I meet with a Smith.
On steamboats, on trains, or balloons in the air,
If I seek for a change, Smith is sure to be there!

On prairies, on deserts, again and again,
I have striven to dodge him, but always in vain;
On the top of Mont Blanc, and at Cape Finisterre,
Some ubiquitous Smith is sure to be there!

There's no shirking or dodging a man with that name;
He may call it "Smythe," yet it's always the same.
Brown, Robinson, Jones, have their kin and their kith,
But they never can hold a candle to Smith.

I can't get away from him — even in death —
For directly I've drawn my very last breath,
The first spirit, I'm certain, that I shall meet with
Will be somebody formerly known as Smith!

THE CHANGE

WHEN first we met the world was gay,
She was my only treasure,
Existence then from day to day
Was one sweet round of pleasure.

We married! How to change we bow,
From fate we cannot sever,
I loved my sweetheart then, but now —
I love her more than ever!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE PICTURE GIRL

The day of the ugly girl is here.—*Fashion note.*

IF you'd pass for an up-to-date beauty,
Though your features are apt to appal
I'd strongly advise you
Let fashion disguise you
As if you had no face at all!
And consider it part of your duty,
Now the day of your triumph has come,
To wear outré dresses
And do up your tresses
In a way that will strike people dumb!

For at last is the artistic heyday
Of all women as ugly as fate,
Who 'spite of all strictures
Will form lovely pictures,
And sartorially looked at, be great!
Their charms will be those of a May Day,
And distance will lend to the view
An enchantment so big
That we shan't care a fig
If the vision is not strictly true!

From a fat face the eyes may be peeping
And the chin very likely recede;
The nose may be lumpy,
The figure quite stumpy,
But who'll to these drawbacks give heed?
For, as long as the gowns are in keeping
With what the mode says is correct
And hats like a pail
All deficiencies veil,
Why, what flaws can a fellow detect?

DESULTORY VERSE

THE EARLY SPARROW

I was awakened by the twittering of the birds.—*Modern novel.*

You little mite of common ornithology,
Why do you rise thus early from your nest?
You ought to make me some sort of apology
For cutting short my matutinal rest.
Pray cease that chirp like unrepaired machinery
When everything is quiet all around;
Why at this hour perch on the neighb'ring greenery
And make that most abominable sound?

You very probably will disagree with me,
And could you speak your mind would doubtless say
I should get up as well, but then, you see, with me
It's very hard to rise at dawn of day,
And if I did some one would surely swear at me,
As I am swearing inwardly at you.
Don't cock your head, you little pest, and stare at me,
Be off now! There's grimalkin coming! Shoo!

FORTUNE'S FAVORITES

THAT "fortune favors fools" Ben Jonson wrote;
I hardly think he was correct,
Despite the fact that I've been used to quote
His words with very great effect.

There are a few exceptions to that rule,
Which you can very often see,
For instance, I have always been a fool,
Yet fortune's never favored me!

DESULTORY VERSE

MY WISHED FOR WIFE

THE other day it came into my head
It was just about time that I should wed,
But my bachelor tastes were rather fixed
And I wanted a wife a trifle mixed!
She must be first of all the best of cooks,
Be interested in sensible books,
A good needlewoman, musician too,
And also be able of course to do
All sorts of housework, if needs must be,
And yet give up most of her time to me!
A clever talker, a capable nurse,
And limit expenditure to my purse;
Quite devoted to me with gentle way
And perfectly willing to—well, obey!
Now it's likely from this extensive list
You'd think I became a polygamist,
But I didn't—and this will make you laugh—
For I married the whole domestic staff
And thus fulfilled the dream of my life
By combining them all, for I wed—my wife!

BEING TRANSLATED

“DOES ‘Veni, vidi, vici’ mean
‘I came, I saw, I won it?’”
“Sometimes; but when you're wed it means
‘I've been and gone and done it!’”

RAISING THE WIND

WHEN I go out to raise the wind,
Cash being very spare,
I always am chagrined to find
A dead calm everywhere.

DESULTORY VERSE

SATIETY AND SATISFACTION

I'm getting ready for the joys
Of Christmas-tide;
I'll have to buy a heap of toys
For other people's girls and boys
I can't abide.

I'll have to tip — *ca va sans dire* —
The Lord knows who;
They'll wish me happy Christmas cheer,
Then spend it all on schnapps and beer —
They always do.

And then to make the farce complete,
I have no doubt
That I shall be obliged to eat
Some turkey, pudding and mince-meat,
And get the gout.

Still, when it's done, though I shall grieve
O'er what I've spent,
To give is better than receive;
Yet how, oh, how I will retrieve
In blessed Lent!

THE CHAMELEON

SHE was a harmony in gold,
Yet women change their hues;
To-day I met her and she was
A discord in the blues!

DESULTORY VERSE

GOOSE DAY

(Michaelmas Day, September 29.—*Calendar.*)

'Tis Michaelmas! I don't know what it means,
But scenes
Of goose, and sage and onions hold their sway
To-day.
To every feast pertains a certain food
So good
That I would wish each day was consecrate!
It's great
To sit down hungry to a luscious meal;
You feel,
No matter the occasion, gratified
Inside!
And on this date I think you will agree
That we,
Though geese ourselves, should surely eat our kind.
You'll find
This feast cannibalistic to your taste,
So haste
To eat this succulent, delicious fare.
I swear
That to a goose to-day I won't say "Boo!"
Will you?

THE POETICAL PRODIGAL

A HUNDRED dollars don't go far with me,
A fact I freely own;
This year we went together to the sea,
And I returned — alone!

DESULTORY VERSE

B. AND D.

I WATCH you, busy bee, and trace
The windings of each azure vein;
You may not have a pretty face,
But you've a most stupendous brain!
Can words your faultless shape express,
Which not Apelles' self has limned?
Your waist! more "beautifully less"
Than her whom classic Prior hymned!
You sip my sugar and my meat,
And then you quaff my milk and tea,
To contemplate you is a treat,
You harmless, chummy, busy bee!
Upon my hand you think to light?
Why not? You're gentle as a lamb!
Ouch!—Yes, you'd better take your flight,
You little brute! You've stung me! (See
Dante.)

THE MAIDEN'S SEASHORE PRAYER

"WHAT are you thinking of?" said he,
"Why do you deeply sigh?
Maybe your thoughts are bent on me?"
(She winked the other eye!)

"You're building castles in the air,
And hope you may beguile
A lover who's a millionaire?"
(She answered with a smile!)

"Ah! do not let me ask in vain,
But tell me what you dream?
What is it that you would attain?"
(A whisper came—"Ice cream!")

DESULTORY VERSE

GOOD-BY, SUMMER

(Autumn begins on September 23 at 11:44 A. M.)

SUMMER'S over — well, what matters
If this superstitious date
All our pleasures yearly shatters?
Fall has beauties just as great.
Leaves are falling, flowers are dying
Under Mother Nature's spell,
We'll endure it without sighing
Just as well!

Flies, mosquitoes, heat excessive,
These the ills of summer days;
Fall is equally aggressive
And as bad in other ways.
Still we'll try to leave behind us
Records that good health will tell,
And may every season find us
Just as well!

A HORRIBLE OUTLOOK

The pawnbrokers in Cardiff, England, have gone on strike.—
News note.

LET laborers, hatters, taxicabs,
Mechanics, bakers, strike!
Let some be firm, and some be scabs,
According to their like;
But, O you man of many spheres,
Don't let that morning dawn
When I — excuse these needy tears! —
Discover I can't pawn!

DESULTORY VERSE

OLD BOYS

I WAS only ten years old
Forty years ago!
Quite a patriot, I'm told,
Forty years ago!
Very likely so were you,
And I fancy that we two
Made a pretty how d'ye do
Forty years ago!
Crackers we let off with vim,
Forty years ago!
Somehow never lost a limb,
Forty years ago!
I have often tempted fate,
And again I'll celebrate
Just as I did on this date,
Forty years ago!
Nowadays — but look there, say,
Shoot 'em off boys, that's the way!
Don't I wish it were to-day,
Forty years ago?

HENPECKED

HE murmurs underneath his breath,
When lectured by his wife,
“Oh, better far the jaws of death
Than all these jaws of life!”

DESULTORY VERSE

THE AERONAUTIC POET

Ah! poet, stay your pen! We've heard so much
Of jewels, gems, and jessamine before,
They've all been written of with lighter touch
By Tommy Moore!
Love, death, day, night, and dying desolation
Are not in these days quite an innovation!

One can't imagine quite why violets blow
In just the same old style you always sing,
Or why your lines forever seem to flow
With birds in Spring!
No doubt they chirp in jocund jubilations,
But give us, pray, original creations!

For, when a poet annually sings
A song that dates back many and many a year,
It's really one of the absurdest things
The world can hear!
Still you go on with fleeting breath, and willows,
The rustling leaves, woods, whispers, surging billows.

Just at this time you're bound to be a slave
To daisy, dandelion, and buttercup;
It doesn't matter how the critics rave,
And cut you up!
Be warned! If for Parnassus' heights you're trying,
Quit verse, and try the latest fashion — flying!

DESULTORY VERSE

PROPER PROPOSALS

'Tis strange — though many suitors have proposed,
And I've been loved quite often in my day —
That I have never yet felt quite disposed
To give myself away,
For each and all of them invariably vow,
“You are the only girl I've ever loved till now!”

It's odd this incapacity for love
They say they had before I loomed in view,
But as they swear it by the stars above,
I have no doubt it's true.
Still, though it has been said, I know, since days of yore,
I'd really rather wed a man who's loved before!

A widower once offered me his heart:
I would have taken him, I must confess,
Had he not slightly overdone his part,
As I was whispering “Yes!”
While saying that he held me dearer than his life,
He added that he'd never loved his wife!

And further still — some men, that I refuse,
Declare they'll kill themselves on taking leave;
This statement, bound at all times to amuse,
Has never made me grieve,
For on two suitors meeting — both declined by me —
One asked the other, “What the poison was to be?”

My disappointments ended in a youth
Who was a little, though not very, bad;
If I would wed him, he'd give up, forsooth,
The vices that he had!
The prospect was too virtuous, though I loved his past,
Besides — his resolutions possibly might last!

DESULTORY VERSE

A WRITER'S WOES

'Tis hard for one who is obscure
By work of pen e'en to exist,
His lot is sad who' be a jour-
nalist !

The prose he writes is rarely read,
And should he choose in verse to soar
His rhyme's declined by ruthless ed-
itor !

He's wretched when he dreams of bliss,
He starves the while he feeds on hope,
What wonder he should grow a mis-
anthrope ?

But once begun it's hard to stop,
So, if the charm you can't resist,
It's best for you to be an op-
timist !

You may receive — and here's the rub —
A (somewhat) welcome intimation,
“ Accepted — will be paid on pub-
lication ! ”

DESULTORY VERSE

A WELCOME AND A WARNING

So you're two years old to-day!
Heavens! how time does fly away,
Even I am growing gray,

I know it!

No one seems to mind a bit,
Though I am a sorry wit,
And (you needn't mention it),
A poet!

Don't you follow in my shoes,
For 'most any one who woos
What they call "the merry muse"
Will rue it!

Lines of verse look very nice,
But the usual market price
Is so bad — take my advice,
Don't do it!

You do everything you can
To be a commercial man
On your father, Louis', plan,
He's clever;
Never mind what people say,
You will find that it will pay
To invest down Arverne way
Forever!

And, when you have made your pile,
Give a thought once in a while
To this bard, who with a smile
Advises

That you'll never, never let
Poetry be an asset;
Or in life you will not get
The prizes!

DESULTORY VERSE

CARESS ON THE CAR

THE tunnel was dark, the tunnel was long,
And the lights had all gone out.
The temptation was assuredly strong —
Of that there could be no doubt.
She was sitting by me, a portly miss
Of thirty summers, or less;
When a notion struck me that I would kiss
That vision of loveliness!
Though the risk was great I thought it worth while,
For I was full of romance,
And to steal a kiss in a furtive style
The pleasure could but enhance!
So when we had come to the darkest part
I gave her a silent smack,
When — I didn't expect it — bless my heart!
If she didn't kiss me back!
We gazed at each other in shy surprise,
When from the tunnel we sped.
The other passengers must have got wise,
For our cheeks were burning red.
At the same depot we left the train,
When I lost my charmer fair.
I thought I should never see her again,
For which I didn't much care.
But, when I got home, there was the maid,
And she gave me such a look.
"Who is that, mother?" I asked. She said,
"Why, Bobby, that's our new cook!"

DESULTORY VERSE

THE POET AND THE PEST

A POET should ever be placid,
But how can he be with this pest?
I've tried even carbolic acid,
Yet they will not give me a rest,
"Your eyes are like stars in high heaven,"
Ah! now I feel just in the vein.
Bless me! here are seventy times seven
Mosquitoes again!

I repeat that your eyes are like — Thunder!
You worry my soul and my skin.
My typewriter's crazy; no wonder.
Be off! Now again I'll begin:
"Bright orbs" — Oh, your venomous stinging
Has addled completely my brain,
I'll rival the dying swan, singing —
They're at it again!

"O lovely and fair constellation,
Beam only, yes, only on me!"
O mother! excuse my vexation.
They'll drive me to *felo de se*.
Go on! I don't care for your biting,
With pleasure there's always some pain,
But — well, I must swear, for I'm writing
In terrible pain!

Let me be, you merciless creatures.
I always thought critics a curse.
But you blotch and you brand all my features,
While they only jibe at my verse.

DESULTORY VERSE

Try once more? No! not if I know it,
And there won't be a soul to complain
That you've dealt me the fate of a poet —
I'm going insane!

THE OPTIMIST

If you're a pessimist, and would be an optimist,
That gloomy look first banish from your face,
Don't think all will be sunny, if you make a mint of
money,
For, as a rule, that isn't quite the case.
Don't hanker after pelf, but obliterate yourself,
And of your neighbor think a little more,
Just make a trifling test to serve his interest,
You'll find 'twill add a fortune to your store.
Give up that daily bustle, that much belauded hustle,
Go quietly to work, and you will see
The advice *festina lente* will bring you luck in plenty,
Of true success it's always been the key!
Have perseverance, tact, when business you enact.
Lose cheerfully, and try to conquer fate,
And, if perchance you meet with momentary defeat,
Your energies for vict'ry don't abate.
Then always be content with everything that's sent,
You'll find that this is very good advice,
For it is a stable creed that, if you would succeed,
You'll have to pay a very goodly price.
Seek what in life is sweet, and you are sure to meet
With all the pleasure you set out to gain,
Cast dismal thoughts away, for a hopeless yesterday
Will bring a glad to-morrow in its train!

DESULTORY VERSE

A POET'S LOVE

HE was a poet, and he loved me well,
At least I couldn't help but draw conclusions;
My grace and beauty held him in a spell
(He said so constantly in his effusions).
In fact, he loved me so
I scarcely had a chance of saying "no!"

He said I'd thoughts I never, even dreamed,
That I experienced absurd sensations;
Had sentiments that really almost seemed
Seraphic, could I trust his allegations.
In truth, my every mood
He very strangely quite misunderstood.

From microscopic molehills he would make
A Himalaya out of all proportions;
His notion of me was a great mistake,
His images were full of sad distortions,
And his allusions to
Some goddesses were vulgar and untrue.

He'd write me sonnets if he were away,
For absence was no hindrance to his wooing
(The extra postage, too, I had to pay),
And rhyme on what he thought I might be doing,
Recalling happy hours
(I don't remember them) in "leafy bowers."

I lost my poet, I am glad to say,
For though so terribly enthusiastic,
He married some one else the other day,
Which shows these natures are somewhat elastic.
My loss I calmly bear;
Still, should you know a poet — best beware!

DESULTORY VERSE

AS TO WALKING TOURS

If you've ever been on a walking tour
Your
Experience has doubtless been like this:
Bliss
Quite unalloyed for, say, a week or two
You
Thoroughly enjoy, if the weather's set
Wet!
But the least of all your ills of your damp
Tramp
You have to carry with you frying pans,
Cans
Of meat and milk, and other kinds of food—
Good
Heavens! I do not think I can recall
All
We filled our knapsacks with, but you'll agree
Tea,
Salt, coffee, butter, sugar was enough
Stuff,
With rubber sheets, spoons, forks, cups, dishes, pins,
Tins,
A rifle, compass, pocket knives, an axe,
Tacks,
Quinine, some liniment and turpentine,
Twine,
Films, cameras and goodness knows just what
Not!
That was our burden! Try it once again?
Plain
Speaking forces me emphatically to say
Nay!

DESULTORY VERSE

EXCELSIOR IN TOWN

THE summer days were waning fast
As through the streets of New York passed
A man who noticed once or twice
The markets were, from meat to ice,
Excelsior!

His brow grew black, his eyes beneath
Shone like a watchful bulldog's teeth,
As to his ears in every tongue
The cry of avid tradesmen rung.
Excelsior!

"Oh, try this steak," the butcher said,
But he — he only shook his head.
"You'll find it tender, broiled or fried,
And only fifty cents." He sighed.
Excelsior!

"Stay," cried a shopgirl, "and invest!"
He disregarded her behest
With teardrops in his moistening eye,
"I'd like to, but I cannot buy —"
Excelsior!

He wandered on till close of day,
For this, for that, he could not pay;
He showered curses on the souls
Of those who'd raised the price of coals
Excelsior!

And in the twilight cold and gray
He homeward turned, but on the way
He drowned his grief in every bar,
Till he became — as prices are —
Excelsior!

DESULTORY VERSE

THE BATHOS OF BROOKLYN

A MAN from New York City was fairly in despair;
He looked so very miserable — he almost tore his hair;
He didn't know where he was at, or where he'd likely
land;

The ways of this bewildering place he couldn't understand.

"Can I help you?" asked his neighbor, observing his dismay.

The other answered: "P'raps you can, for I have lost my way!"

The stranger laughed, "Of course I will; just tell your woes to me,

For I was born in Brooklyn in eighteen fifty-three!"

"I have to go to Umpty street, the number's sixty-four,
I've asked for information from a score of men or more;

They've sent me here, they've sent me there, I've ridden to and fro,

From north to south, from east to west, but you will surely know."

The stranger smiled in confidence, and taking out a book,

Said, "Pray, excuse me, while at this I take a passing look.

Sometimes one quite forgets a route, familiar though it be,

And I was born in Brooklyn in eighteen fifty-three!"

He pored that volume through and through, then to the traveler said,

"The wrong car you have taken, sir, you should have gone instead

DESULTORY VERSE

On quite a different line — dear me! you'd better — ah,
um, well!

It's really very funny, but it's sometimes hard to tell
Exactly how to find one's way, the streets are chang-
ing so,

Still, if you transfer — yes, that's right; but wait a
minute — no!

That street I'm quite familiar with — of course — now
let me see —

For I was born in Brooklyn in eighteen fifty-three!"

The traveler waited while the man turned over page
on page,

Then getting up quite suddenly he quit the car in rage.
"With churches, babies, real estate, you people are
insane,

One tries to find his way about, and always tries in
vain,

For your Borough is a puzzle, a mystifying maze,
It really should be straightened out in these enlightened
days.

It's not the slightest use to ask, you're all of you at
sea,

Though you were born in Brooklyn in eighteen fifty-
three!"

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